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## **AFRICAN MINE LABOURERS AND CONDITIONS OF LABOUR IN THE MINING INDUSTRY IN RHODESIA 1940-1974**

**D. G. CLARKE**

The mining industry of Rhodesia was an important component of the 'industrial complex' that developed after 1940. However, the proletarianization of African mineworkers was influenced by conditions that differentiated it from other forms of labour mobilization typical of the urban-industrial economy. The features of proletarianization unique to this industry were promoted by the pattern of accumulation and the specific requirements of production. These characteristics were reflected in institutional arrangements, labour legislation and unionisation process. Labour mobilization under mining production differed too from domestic and plantation production, the other non-industrial sectors. The State recognized these differences in its designing of labour policies.

In the postwar period, the essential and defining structural features of capitalist mining development were: an increasing dominance of foreign monopolistic capital in production; the diminishing of the role played by the national bourgeoisie and local small-scale capital in the industry; a continuation of a high level of dependence on cheap foreign African labour power in production despite State initiatives to localize the employment structure; the continued domination over African workers in the industry not only by the power of capital and the State, but also by a monopoly of the legal collective bargaining process for African workers being exercised by the artisanal and bureaucratic strata of the labour aristocracy (with the explicit assistance of the State and foreign capital); the constrained development of a semi-skilled class of African mineworkers; the structural malformation of African unionization and the consequent relative impoverishment of the African labouring classes.

This paper will identify these features, especially with regard to those which have influenced conditions of labour in mining employment. A discussion of modern changes in the production structure and the political economy of the 'mining complex' in Southern Rhodesia is necessary for this inquiry.

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### Production and Labour relations

Firstly, the industry's relative contribution to gross domestic product fell (and continued to do so) after 1924.<sup>1</sup> At that time mining contributed £3.13 million to national income, three times more than manufacturing and nearly 30 per cent of total output. By 1943 its share was only 26 percent and in 1954 it stood at 8.6 percent. By 1972 mining contributed less than 6 percent of G.D.P. However the volume and value of output had grown enormously in the interim. From 1924-42 the value of output (in current prices) doubled and it had done so again by 1954 when it stood at \$29 million. Output rose steadily to \$38.0 million in 1964 and then rose 230 percent in the following 9 years to a level of \$90.3 million (1973). The volume index itself rose 196 percent during the 1964-73 period.

Secondly, the internal structure of production in the industry was radically changed. Gold production — essentially based on local capital and small workings — declined in relative and absolute significance, even though it has enjoyed a mild resuscitation in the 1972-75 period. In 1935 the total number of gold mines was 1,750.<sup>2</sup> The peak in production was reached during 1941 and by 1962 there were less than 200 goldmines in operation.<sup>3</sup> The mining industry thus grew increasingly large-scale in character and less labour-intensive. The balance of economic power within the industry became increasingly concentrated within the grasp of foreign monopolistic capital (based in South Africa, Britain and the United States).

International capital's growing dominance in production was associated with increasing mechanization. The new techniques of production consequently facilitated a change in the pattern of demand for labour. Firstly, the capital-intensification process 'repelled' labour. Thus to 1937 the number of Africans in employment grew rapidly and reached the level of 90,600.<sup>4</sup> By 1963 there were only 40,900 African workers in the industry. Substantial and sudden post-Federal expansion pushed the African labour force up to 54,500 in 1973, despite continued capital intensification and mechanization. Secondly, employers adopted a different pattern of (African) labour utilization. Changed production conditions required the development of a class of semi-skilled

<sup>1</sup>See Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry of Southern Rhodesia*, Salisbury, 1945, Appendix A, Table, p.70. Data are also extracted from Rhodesia, *National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia* 1972, C.S.O., 1973, Table 4; and Rhodesia, *National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia 1954-1964*, C.S.O., 1965.

<sup>2</sup>G. Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia*, Mouton, The Hague, 1967, p.47.

<sup>3</sup>A.M.W.U., *Production of Smallworker Mines: Compiled from Mines Department Returns for 1962* (mimeo). For this document, and many others from the records of the A.M.W.U., acknowledgement is gratefully made to the union and its officials.

<sup>4</sup>For data see W. J. Barber, *The Economy of British Central Africa*, O.U.P., 1961, p.256; and Rhodesia, *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, C.S.O., August, 1974, Table 14.

African workers and, because of a growing manpower shortage, the absorption of a small number of Africans into skilled grades. Semi-skilled labour therefore had to be 'attracted' and retained within the industry.<sup>5</sup> The industry-specific nature of many of these necessary skills meant that producers had to play a major part in the reconstitution of the labour structure. Labour stabilization and higher wages resulted. These initiatives brought employers into greater conflict with the labour aristocracy of the industry, especially at the artisanal level where the Associated Mineworkers Union (A.M.W.U. which was controlled by skilled and certified production workers, resisted attempts at rationalising production so as to maintain their privileges and security of employment.

The 'repulsion-attraction' process concentrated the power over African mineworkers in the hands of large producers who continued to follow a labour policy dependent on a cheap foreign African proletariat. This policy was adhered to in order to maximize capital accumulation under conditions in which *equally cheap* local labour supplies were in relatively short supply. The mining industry was traditionally dependent upon a large foreign African labour force.<sup>6</sup> In 1936 nearly 60,000 of the industry's 84,000 African wage-labourers were 'aliens'. Most of these workers came from neighbouring peasant communities outside Rhodesia in Nyasaland and Mocambique and had arrived in the Southern Rhodesian 'mining complex' after the Depression of the 1930's. Their inflow facilitated a cut in real wages at this time.<sup>7</sup> Many stayed on in mining employment despite the very low wages. In 1969 there were still 23,947 foreign workers employed in mining production, nearly 50 per cent of all African mineworkers.<sup>8</sup> The *gradual* reduction in the dependence of foreign controlled mines on foreign workers was aided by a process which allowed employers to release foreign workers slowly but only as cheap supplies of local labour were made available.

Large-scale foreign producers were eventually able to steadily control the composition of the industry's labour force. In 1938, 30 out of 920 mines employed more than 300 African workers;<sup>9</sup> by 1945 the total number of

<sup>5</sup>'As wages of unskilled labour increase the labourer who is doing the work of a bulldozer or a power shovel is replaced . . . Consequently hundreds of unskilled Africans are thrown out of jobs even though the operator of the machine is an African, but skilled artisans must be engaged to maintain the machines.' Chamber of Mines *23rd Annual Report for the Year 1961*, p.23 (hereafter cited as C. M. *Annual Report*, 1961). Emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup>W. Margolis, *The Position of the Native Population in the Economic Life of Southern Rhodesia*, M.A., University of South Africa, 1968, p.108.

<sup>7</sup>I. R. Phimister, *Decline of Gold and the Changing Composition of the Mining Industry 1919-1953*. Department of History, University of Rhodesia, unpublished, 1975.

<sup>8</sup>Rhodesia, 1969 Census of Employees, 1973, Table 10 (mimeo).

<sup>9</sup>Southern Rhodesia, *Statistical Year Book 1947*, Government Stationery Office, 1947, Table 121.

producers had fallen to 656 of which 33 employed more than 300 African workers. In 1962 there were still 33 mines employing more than 300 Africans out of a total of only 344 producers.<sup>10</sup> These top 33 employers accounted for 28,000 of the industry's 40,772 workers at this time. All evidence indicates that this structural trend continued after 1963.

The tendency towards monopsonistic concentration is emphasized when it is realized that of the 292 'smallworker' mines in production in 1962, 116 employed between 1 and 9 employees (African and European) and 181 mines employed less than 25 persons.<sup>11</sup> The labour policies and strategies of foreign monopoly capital thus came to determine the conditions of the bulk of the African labouring class in the 'mining complex', even though they were influenced by the policies of the State and the socio-economic and political interests of two important classes in the form of the labour aristocracy and smallworker-owners.

The roots of growing foreign monopoly control lay in the Depression and the gradual demise of smallworker capital after the 1930's.<sup>12</sup> By 1975 the control exerted over the mining sector by foreign capital was substantial. Of those mines falling under Part II of the Mineworkers' Agreement (that sector of the industry which up until August, 1975 was subject to collective bargaining), at least 27 out of 49 mining enterprises were directly identifiable as being owned and controlled by foreign corporations.<sup>13</sup> These were also the largest mines in the economy and accounted for approximately 50 percent of all mineworkers employed in 1974. All the mining companies quoted on the Rhodesian Stock Exchange in 1972, except for one very small holding (Divide Chrome), were foreign controlled.<sup>14</sup> These corporations had an assessed share capital value of \$139 million, a value 60 percent greater than the value of the shareholdings of quoted domestic-controlled manufacturing industries and 35 percent of the market value of all quoted share capital in the industrial sector.<sup>15</sup> The distribution of shareholdings in quoted companies was also highly concentrated.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, foreign capital controlled the most pro-

<sup>10</sup>A.M.W.U., *Numbers of Mines in Southern Rhodesia Classified by Size of African Labour Force, 1962* (mimeo).

<sup>11</sup>A.M.W.U., *Production of Smallworker Mines*, *op.cit.*

<sup>12</sup>D. J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1970, pp.118-43.

<sup>13</sup>A.M.W.U., *Mines Coming Under Part II of the Industrial Agreement (Mineworkers)*, (mimeo).

<sup>14</sup>Waddacor, Brooking and Company, *Rhodesia Company Register Analysis*, 1972.

<sup>15</sup>In 1972 the Chairman of Rio Tinto claimed that 80-90 percent of the Rhodesian mining industry was 'overseas owned'. See *Chamber of Mines Journal*, May, 1972, p.30 (hereafter cited as *C.M.J.*, May, 1972).

<sup>16</sup>See Waddacor, Brooking and Company, *op.cit.*, for details on Wankie Colliery, Rio Tinto, Rhodesian Nickel Corporation and M.T.D. (Mangula). In these corporations the top 10 shareholders accounted for more than 63 percent of all shareholdings.

fitable areas of production. In 1963 foreign controlled mining companies accounted for 80 percent of all gross operating profits in the mining sector.<sup>17</sup> About 40 percent of these companies were 'located' in South Africa and the bulk of the remainder were British based. In 1963 alone these enterprises counted for 85 percent of gross fixed capital formation in the mining industry (65 percent of it in South African based companies). The extensive dominance of foreign capital in the industry was significant in determining labour policies.

The managerial class in foreign enterprises was essentially trans-national in character, though a number of prominent individuals liked to stress the opposite and built up local reputations as 'Rhodesian citizens'. Whilst always emphasizing the need for Rhodesia to maintain its dependence on foreign 'assistance' (i.e., foreign induced inflows of capital and the prevailing division of labour in the international economy), mining executives attempted to stress the *local character* of their corporations. They were keen too to develop *some* local participation in the ownership of mining enterprises within clearly defined limits which would not infringe foreign majority shareholder interests.<sup>18</sup> This was a calculated strategy on the part of international business to make their control *appear* to be 'truly Rhodesian' and so meet various socio-political objections to 'imperial control' that were the hallmark of an ascendant populist-cum-nationalist sentiment characterizing later (especially post-UDI) settler colonialism. At the same time sound economic logic underpinned the 'localizing' philosophy of foreign monopoly capital. The statement of a former Vice-Chairman of the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines and a Chairman of Rio Tinto (Rhodesia), a British controlled company, epitomizes the pecuniary interest involved here: 'it should not be necessary for a mining company which (is) *recognized* as Rhodesian to have to obtain exchange control permission to borrow money in Rhodesia'.<sup>19</sup> This clarifies the position. International corporations wished to avoid restrictions which constrained the level of 'gearing up' of capital and thereby the rate of profit for shareholders in foreign countries, by the regulation of access to local sources of loan finance from the Reserve Bank. The four conditions proposed by Rio-Tinto to provide a 'workable definition of when a foreign company becomes Rhodesian', however strict their application, would have failed to alter the balance of control

<sup>17</sup>See C.S.O., *Report on the Results of the National Income and Balance of Payments Questionnaire sent to Companies Operating in Malawi, Rhodesia and Zambia in 1963*, Salisbury, 1964.

<sup>18</sup>See the statements of Mr. R. S. Walker in *C.M.J.*, May, 1972, in which it is suggested that 25 per cent of the equity of foreign mining companies should be held by 'Rhodesian investors'.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* Emphasis added.

between domestic and external shareholders in the policies of the corporation.<sup>20</sup>

The control of foreign capital at the level of ownership of productive capacity was reinforced by a steady increase in influence at the organizational level, in the National Industrial Council (N.I.C.) and over local capital in the industry. After 1959, the date from which the Rhodesian Mining Federation (the representative of smallworker interests at the collective bargaining table) was not represented on the N.I.C., foreign corporate interests dominated the Chamber of Industries and thus its negotiating strategy with labour, as well mining capital's relationship with the State.

The domination of large-scale and foreign capital in the industry was reflected in the membership and constitution of the Chamber of Mines, the organizational center of the managerial system in the mining industry. The constitution under which mining companies operated from 1960-70 explicitly recognized this oligopolistic nature, so supporting large producer interests. A 1970 amendment reinforced this control when it incorporated a principle giving 'the companies . . . which have the largest stake in the industry, the largest say in the determination of the policy of the Chamber'.<sup>21</sup> Effectively, too, foreign producers obtained an entrenched majority on the Executive Committee of the Chamber, which allowed this 'fraction' of capital to dominate the proceedings of the Chamber and also the policy of mining employers because only the Chamber (after 1959) had legal rights to negotiate on behalf of all mining employers subject to N.I.C. regulations.<sup>22</sup>

Foreign capital did not function in isolation from local smallworker capital, and smallworkers were not disorganized even though the Rhodesian Mining Federation, its principal institution, was subordinate to the Chamber of Mines.<sup>23</sup> However, their organizational energies were fragmented. In 1966, for instance, there were seven active smallworker associations and in the same year an African Mining Association was formed to encourage small-scale African capitalism in the industry. However, the latter organization failed the following year and was not revived, at least not by 1975.<sup>24</sup> The weakness

<sup>20</sup>The 'tests' were: the majority of directors would have to be Rhodesian citizens (citizenship can be obtained after 2 years residence); three-quarters of the directors would have to be resident in Rhodesia; the company would have to be quoted on the Rhodesian Stock Exchange (a number are already); 25 percent of the equity should be held by Rhodesian investors.

<sup>21</sup>C.M., *Annual Report*, 1970, p.3. Also see C.M., *Annual Report*, 1971, p.3. Companies with the largest (combined) volume and level of employment have been given the largest voting power (under a specially devised formula).

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.* In 1971 the 5 'A' class members elected one-half of the Executive. There were 10 classes of membership (A was the largest producer class) and 100 different members.

<sup>23</sup>See Colin Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, Oxford, 1959, pp.103-05.

<sup>24</sup>See C.M., *Annual Report* 1966; C.M., *Annual Report*, 1967.

of smallworker capital in relation to foreign capital was not based simply on its small size. It lay also in the distribution of local capital across a broad spectrum of types of mineral production. The result was that in each sector the individual local producers were particularly weak. In 1962, for instance, 184 out of the existing 302 smallworkers were occupied with gold production. The balance produced 20 other different commodities. The total value of output by these producers amounted to \$5.3 million, a small sum when set against the \$50.2 million produced by the industry in the same year.<sup>25</sup> The political significance of this class, however, exceeded that indicated by its quantitative contribution to output. Many of these producers enjoyed connections with plantation production, small-scale manufacturing and commercial enterprises, as well as with influential political parties.<sup>26</sup> There was also the socio-economic significance of the effect upon white employment. The 8,500 employees of smallworkers in 1962 included 322 European employees, an average of just over one per enterprise.

The structure of capital in the industry had an important bearing on the balance of power existing between capital and labour. This affected producer relations with the State.<sup>27</sup> The State regularly consulted mining employers *before* proposing changes to labour legislation and other legal enactments that affected profits.<sup>28</sup> In doing so it attempted to represent the interests of capital insofar as they were consistent with the reproduction of the existing balance of social forces in the system. In particular, the State sought to meet the need of foreign and local capital for cheap labour-power, the different forms of which required a close liaison between the two parties to ensure that adequate supplies of this commodity were made available.<sup>29</sup>

The relations between capital and African labour for the latter part of the period under review can be highlighted by a consideration of profit/wage relationships in the mining industry from 1965-72. During this time gross operating profits (G.O.P.) were both high and increasing. During these 7 years

<sup>25</sup>Rhodesia, *Monthly Digest*, *op.cit.*, Table 27.

<sup>26</sup> See Rhodesia, *National Accounts 1972*, *op.cit.*, Table 15, where it is shown that the 'Work Given Out' by mining producers has risen by more than fourfold to \$12.7 million in 1972 compared to 1963. Also see Rhodesia, *Report by J. L. Sadie on Planning for the Economic Development of Rhodesia*, Salisbury Government Printer, 1967, p.18, where it is shown that in 1965 the backward and forward linkages for mining were 25 percent and 10 percent respectively.

<sup>27</sup>For instance, royalties have been low. See Rhodesia, *National Accounts*, *op. cit.*, Table 23, where it is shown that royalties accruing to the State only rose 25 percent in the 1965-72 period up to a level of \$1.5 million (less than 5 percent of Gross Operating Profits).

<sup>28</sup>For example, see C.M., *Annual Report*, 1971, in regard to amendments to the Industrial Conciliation Act.

<sup>29</sup>For details see C.M. *Annual Report*, 1969; and C.M., *Annual Report*, 1970.



G.O.P. rose 50 percent, from \$25.1 million to \$37.8 million.<sup>30</sup> By 1970 the value of G.O.P. had reached a level of \$32.2 million. As a portion of gross output, G.O.P. increased from 48.1 percent to 50.1 percent in the 1971-72 period and in other years was more in the 44-52 percent range. By contrast African wages (for all classes of labour) fell consistently as a portion of gross output after 1968, when the proportion was 19.67 percent, to 14.76 percent in 1972. At the same time the numbers of African workers increased by 14 percent to a level of 54,000 in 1973. The industry therefore had a marked ability to finance gross fixed capital formation from G.O.P. In 1970 the percentage of the former to the latter was 54.6 percent, in 1971 it was 70.9 percent and in 1972 it dropped to 46.8 percent. There was only one year (1965) in which the industry's gross fixed investment level exceeded G.O.P.

These aggregate figures are imperfect in their reflection of the shifts in the industry's class relationships. They present merely an overall statistical impression. The stratification found within the African mineworker class must be examined since it was around this differentiation that considerable class conflict developed.

### **Wage Patterns and Stratification amongst African Mineworkers**

There is no doubt that the average wages of African mineworkers in 1901 were higher in real terms than they were in the mid-1940's. In 1901 the Chief Native Commissioner noted that underground labourers were paid 50/- to 60/- monthly and surface workers 25/- to 40/- per month.<sup>31</sup> 'Special' (semi-skilled) workers received from 75/- to 80/- in cash wages. In 1904 it was reported that about two-thirds of all African miners were paid an average cash wage of 50/- per month. These relatively high wage payments, arising from the fact that peasants had adequate access to alternative means of subsistence, can be contrasted with the 1939 and 1949 (current price) monthly average cash wage for African mineworkers of 26/6d and 30/6d respectively.<sup>32</sup> On some mines (e.g. mica and tin mines) the average monthly cash wage in 1946 was 22/6d.<sup>33</sup> However, the recovery from the 1930's Depression during the post-1936 period led to a general rise in both cash wages and earnings. A greater degree of stratification resulted as the composition of the African labour force changed and the unionization of African workers proceeded apace, *albeit* in a malformed manner.

<sup>30</sup>Data from Rhodesia, National Accounts, *op.cit.*, Table 5, Table 15, Table 41 and Table 42.

<sup>31</sup>W. Margolis, *op.cit.*, p.144

<sup>32</sup>W. J. Barber, *op.cit.*, p.227. Nonetheless, Barber is still able to describe African mineworkers as 'the aristocracy of the African labour force'. (p.202).

<sup>33</sup>I. R. Phimister, *Decline of Gold*, *op.cit.*, p.139.

Up to 1960 African wages were fixed without reference to either collective bargaining or negotiated minimum wage policies. The Native Labour Boards Act (1947) did not apply initially to mining enterprises, although a Labour Board was set up for the mining industry in 1954 on which the AMWU was represented.<sup>34</sup> Bargains struck between African workers and management were done on an individual enterprise basis and were governed by the Masters and Servants Act until a Labour Board was established. Eventually in 1959 the Industrial Conciliation Act was amended to incorporate the mining industry. It gave African mineworkers the *de jure* right to bargaining collectively. At this time, however, the State's foreign 'free flow' labour policy was crucial to ensure adequate labour supplies to meet labour demand at a low price. Underdevelopment of the local peasant economy, 'squatter' evictions, the Land Husbandry Act (1951), and other rural policies, together with urban influx control, helped ensure a steady supplement of cheap local labour to producers. Nonetheless, the mining industry (especially small-workers) faced 'shortages' of unskilled surface and underground workers. A high level of demand for base minerals during the war, and local labour supply scarcities resulting from competition for labour supplies from secondary industry (for semi-skilled workers) and plantation producers (for unskilled and especially foreign workers), gave impetus to mine employers to raise wages.

The 'labour shortage' arose for a number of reasons. Having cut cash wages by up to 30 percent (from 31/- to 21/- monthly) between 1931 and 1935, and not having restored the current price value of the 1931 wage by 1954, producers found it difficult to attract even foreign workers, especially as the price of basic commodities had risen rapidly during this period. Small-workers, 'poor employers' and remote mines set away from the main 'migrant' labour routes were hardest hit. The military requirements of foreign territories in 1943 further affected 'traditional' cheap labour supplies from outside Rhodesia.<sup>35</sup> The State made a concession to mining producers by diverting some of the conscripted labour force away from food production towards base mineral production. Gold producers, however, were given no relief. South African mines on the Rand were offering higher wages and acted as a magnet for Rhodesian and foreign workers in the mining industry who would 'work their way south' from mine to mine eventually to 'desert' from the

<sup>34</sup>See 'Resume of the History of the Association' (A.M.W.U.) in A.M.W.U., *The Granite Review*, October, 1967, p.14 (hereafter cited as A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October, 1967).

<sup>35</sup>Southern Rhodesia, Report of the Secretary, Department of Mines and Public Works on Mines for the Year Ended 31 December 1943, p.36 (hereafter cited as Southern Rhodesia, Report of the Secretary, 1943).

gold mining complex in the Gwanda region so as to cross the border into South Africa.<sup>36</sup>

Concern at this state of affairs, which led to the policing of the Limpopo border, as well as to employer pressure on the State, resulted in the establishment of the Rhodesian Native Labour Supply Commission (R.N.L.S.C.) in 1946. The R.N.L.S.C. did not actually function in 1946, however, and a general 'labour shortage' was experienced in all parts of the mining industry.<sup>37</sup> Employers had no alternative but to alter basic rates of pay, particularly in the labouring grades. Large-scale monopolistic producers, who had accumulated large surpluses during the war, were in a good position to make this adjustment. Smallworkers, especially in gold mining, where commodity prices were fixed at the 1935 level, were less well placed. Many experienced severe 'labour shortages' and, under pressure of rising costs, were forced to leave the industry. The effect of this chronic crisis in smallworking production was to 'release' supplies of labour for other mining employers. Throughout the late 1940's the shortage grew. As large producers expanded their plant, labour demand increased, wages rose, and labour was bid away from smallworkers. The R.N.L.S.C. were unable to meet all demands placed upon them at this stage.<sup>38</sup> Many mines had to curtail production. Higher labour costs and the general 'shortage' thereof combined to induce further mechanization. This was not a strategy that smallworkers could follow easily with their limited financial resources. Even R.N.L.S.C. supplied contractees were regarded as 'too expensive' by this class of producers, especially as the Commission raised its capitation fees between 1947 and 1953 to raise revenues to meet its mounting deficits on contract labour operations.<sup>39</sup> Marginal gold mines were severely affected too. The rising costs of 'rations' and housing made matters difficult for local capital which was heavily concentrated in the 'fixed-price sector' of the mineral export market. Despite the 'shedding' of labour in the industry after 1945, the mining industry continued to remain relatively uncompetitive in the domestic market for unskilled labour. As a result shortages were experienced on many mines up to the early 1950's, except, however, where wages had risen and/or mechanization had reduced the need for dependence on unskilled labour supplies.

<sup>36</sup>See Southern Rhodesia, *Annual Report of the Chief Government Mining Engineer for the Year 1939, Salisbury, p.5* (hereafter cited as Southern Rhodesia, *C.G.M.E.*, 1939).

<sup>37</sup>Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Secretary*, 1946, p.11 Shabanie Asbestos Mine was reported to be short of 1,000 labourers. See Southern Rhodesia, *C.M.G.E.*, 1946, p.58.

<sup>38</sup>R.N.L.S.C. supplied contractees were first allocated to mines in 1950. From 1950-60, 23,587 two-year contract workers were allocated to the mining industry. Many of these workers went to Wankie Colliery. See Annual Reports of the Chairman of the Rhodesian Native Labour Supply Commission 1947-61 (inclusive).

<sup>39</sup>See Duncan Clarke, *Contract Workers and Underdevelopment in Rhodesia*, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1974, where it is shown that the 'capitation fee' on 2-year contractees rose from \$17.3 to \$52 from 1947-53.

Wages did not only increase to rectify the low wage structure after a long period of imbalance, but were also deliberately adjusted, by some employers, as a response to general African working-class militancy. Low wages, inflation and social unrest in general, made employers acutely aware of their vulnerability to unionization and strike action. Memories of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, which threatened to penetrate the insulated compounds in the late 1920's and 1930's, were still strong.<sup>40</sup> In 1947 there was 'considerable unrest . . . in various districts and small strikes . . . occurred due to inability to obtain maize meal at various times'.<sup>41</sup> The findings of the Commission of Inquiry into the 1945 Railway Strike caused 'a certain amount of trouble' in various districts as worker consciousness of the correlation between collective mobilization and higher wages became more widespread.<sup>42</sup> The effects of the 1948 General Strike were far reaching in their implications. Contract workers, recruited into the 'mining complex' by large employers such as Anglo American's Wankie Collieries, brought a high 'desertion' rate and agitation to the compounds. In many mines there were strong links forged between the African working-class in Southern Rhodesia and that of Northern Rhodesia where organization and unionization amongst the labouring classes was further advanced, large-scale strike action having previously been resorted to in 1940.<sup>43</sup> The management of some multinationals, operating in both spheres of Central Africa, saw an advantage in maintaining the initiative and pre-empting, co-opting or even thwarting collective mobilization. These employers set the lead for others in Southern Rhodesia. The success of their strategy is evidenced by the comparative strength to which African unionism developed in Northern Rhodesia as opposed to Southern Rhodesia.

These socio-economic forces created a wage structure very different from that prevailing during the pre-Depression period. From 1932-37 average monthly wages fell by up to 25 percent for Hammer 'Boys', Surface workers, Trimmers and Lashers. At the beginning of the war the monthly cash rate for these grades was 22/7d.<sup>44</sup> By the end of the war 1932 levels had only just been restored (in *current* prices). In the following five years, however, average wages for Hammer 'boys' rose from 33/3d to 68/3d and for surface workers from 38/8d to 60/11d. In some sectors of the industry, e.g. coal mining (dominated by large-scale foreign capital), wage rates were well above average. By 1953 coal workers received cash wages nearly 55 percent higher than

<sup>40</sup>On the rise and fall of the I.C.U. see T. O. Ranger, *African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*, Heinemann, 1970.

<sup>41</sup>Southern Rhodesia, *C.M.G.E.*, 1947, p.8.

<sup>42</sup>Southern Rhodesia, *C.M.G.E.*, 1947, p.8.

<sup>43</sup>See W. J. Barber, *op.cit.*

<sup>44</sup>Data from Southern Rhodesia, *Statistical Year Book*, 1938, p.81; Southern Rhodesia, *Statistical Year Book*, 1947, p.105; Southern Rhodesia, *Official Yearbook* 1952, *op.cit.*, p.523; and Southern Rhodesia, *C.M.G.E.*, 1955, p.17.

gold miners and employees in the mica industry. Between 1949, the year in which the urban Labour Regulations became effective, and 1953 average monthly wages rose more than 50 percent.

The same processes — mechanization, unskilled labour shortages, strike action (in 1954 at Wankie for example) and semi-skilled labour stabilization — operated in the first 5 years of prosperity during Federation to push wages up. By 1958 average earnings had risen to \$17.7 monthly.

In 1960 the legal position on African wage determination was changed by the State. The A.M.W.U. obtained 'rights' to negotiate on behalf of *all* workers in the labouring and semi-skilled grades. Minimum wage legislation was introduced, but African workers were not given *effective* power to control or direct the bargaining process. Claims submitted on behalf of labourers were submitted to the N.I.C. by the A.M.W.U., itself controlled, under Section 47 of the Industrial Conciliation Act, by the 'skilled workers', i.e. Grade I members of the union, an artisanal class comprising a tiny fraction of potential members and all mineworkers. The State and employers agreed to the non-democratic structured union taking over the collective bargaining rights of the labouring and semi-skilled classes.

The experience of A.M.W.U. wage 'bargaining' illustrates how the union was used to further the interests of skilled employees and how African labourers received no affective protection as a result of the A.M.W.U.'s activities on the N.I.C. In 1961, the date of inauguration of an agreement to cover African workers (the agreement previous to this, valid for 2 years as of 1959, pertained to non-Africans), the underground and surface workers were protected by minimum rates of 22 cents and 20 cents (excluding rations) per 8-hour shift.<sup>45</sup> Juvenile surface workers were entitled to 10 cents per shift. By 1974 the respective minimum rates were 26 cents and 24 cents (juvenile workers 12 cents). By contrast, Grade A minimum rates had improved from 508 cents to 700 cents per shift during the 1961-70 period. The African consumer price index increased by 3 percent per annum on average from 1962-74.<sup>46</sup> Thus in real terms the minimum wages of underground and surface workers *fell* by 17.4 percent and 10.5 percent respectively. Neither State minimum wages nor union action in itself can account for the actual rising earnings of African workers from 1959-73. Indeed, if anything, the A.M.W.U.'s policy would appear, at least at the N.I.C. level, to have had an adverse effect upon 'labouring members'.

<sup>45</sup>National Industrial Council for the Mining Industry (Mineworkers), *Agreement 5th May, 1961 — 3rd May, 1963*, S.R.G.N. No. 181 of 1961; and *Industrial Agreement: Mining Industry (Mineworkers)*, R.G.N. No. 488 of 1970.

<sup>46</sup>Rhodesia, *Monthly Digest, op.cit.*, Tables 18 and 19.

Despite A.M.W.U. ineffectiveness, *average* African earnings (all grades) rose steadily after 1959 when the level was \$20.3 per month (constant 1964 prices).<sup>47</sup> By 1973 real earnings (including cash, 'rations' and an imputed valuation for housing) had risen more than 30 percent to \$26.9 monthly (constant 1964 prices). However, to appreciate the causes behind the changing *average* wage level, it is important to identify more closely the stratification that took place as a result of the development of a relatively large semi-skilled class of African mineworkers.

In 1961 semi-skilled workers (e.g. drivers, qualified assistants, gang-leaders, drillers and artisans' assistants) received minimum rates per shift of between 3/6d and 6/6d.<sup>48</sup> Their minimum rates were between 1½ and 2 times those of surface and underground workers. By 1974 the rates per shift for semi-skilled operatives were set at between \$1.00 and \$1.50 for most types of work, but reached as high as \$2.00 and \$3.00 for certain tasks (e.g. drivers of hoists).<sup>49</sup> These B grade employees numbered 1,994 in 1970. Another larger stratum of semi-skilled African workers (8,980) received minimum rates in the region of \$0.50 to \$0.75 per shift (mostly assistants to semi-skilled operatives and skilled/A grade workers). In the case of operatives, minimum rates were between 4 and 12 times as high as those for unskilled labourers, although the bulk of semi-skilled workers were paid 2-3 times more than labourers.

Much of the increase in *average* African wages was therefore the result of this stratification. To what extent this has been the case can be demonstrated by data from N.I.C. records regarding the numbers of workers in each grade.<sup>50</sup> In 1961 semi-skilled workers (operatives and assistants) were classified as Grade 2 workers. They numbered 4,356 who were under the Mineworkers Agreement at this time (approximately 13 percent of the total number covered by the Agreement). Grade 3 workers (labourers) numbered 28,184. By 1974 their numbers had dropped to 24,104 (61 percent of all mineworkers in the Agreement). However, the numbers of Grade 2 operatives had increased and there were 2,207 in this category and another 11,840 Grade 2 assistants, who together accounted for more than 35 percent of all African mineworkers covered by the Agreement. The rest were Grade A skilled artisans.

This pattern was also reflected in the case of Staff Employees, who were covered by a separate Agreement negotiated by the Mine Officers and

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, Table 16.

<sup>48</sup>S.R.G.N. No. 181 of 1961, pp.16-17.

<sup>49</sup>As per R.G.N. No. 488 of 1970 extended to 1974.

<sup>50</sup>See N.I.C., Number of Employees 1961 (mimeo); and N.I.C., Number of Employees on Contributing Mines, March 1974 (mimeo).

Salaried Staff Association (M.O.S.S.A.). The number of Africans who fell under the higher wage provisions of these occupational groups also grew over the period. Their wages were substantially higher than those of the labouring classes and they rose faster.

In 1973 there were 16,460 African workers in Mining and Quarrying who were paid a monthly cash wage in excess of \$30.<sup>51</sup> This left 38,010 who were paid less than \$30 in cash monthly. Nearly 46 percent of all workers received cash wages of less than \$20 monthly and 6,010 (mostly outside Part II of the Agreement and employed by smallworkers) received cash wages of less than \$10 monthly. This compares markedly with the position that prevailed in 1961 when only 829 out of 47,493 African workers in Mining and Quarrying were paid a cash wage of more than \$30 monthly (1961 prices).<sup>52</sup> Fully 55 percent of all African workers at this time received cash wages of less than \$10 monthly.

Despite the general upward trend in *average* African mine wages from 1959-74, the process of development clearly led to a differentiation. Most workers in the labouring grades (many of them foreign workers) continued to receive very low wages and almost no protection in the form of adequate minimum wages. The minimum rates for labourers in the 1970 Agreement (which prevailed until August 1975) enabled underground and surface workers to earn (in a 26 shift month) a minimum cash wage of \$6.76 and \$6.24 respectively. After allowing for 'rations' (valued by the Chamber of Mines at \$7.02 monthly) the labourer's minimum rate of remuneration was less than that considered necessary to cover the costs of subsistence for a *single* worker.<sup>53</sup> Some mines paid slightly above the minimum rate and provided better 'rations' or supplements which reduced the costs of subsistence that workers had to finance themselves. Others did not. It is not difficult to see why, therefore, 'extra-economic' forms of control were required in the mining compounds to keep workers 'adjusted' to the cheap labour system and why throughout the postwar period large and periodic 'wildcat' strikes developed into violent struggles. The 1975 Agreement, which raised minimum rates of pay of surface and underground labourers to 35 cents and 40 cents per shift respectively, has not provided sufficient change to alter this assessment.

<sup>51</sup>C.S.O., Wage Distribution of African Employees by Industrial Sector for the Month of June 1973, DL/830/66, 1974 (mimeo).

<sup>52</sup>Rhodesia, *Final Report on the September, 1961 Census of Employees*, C.S.O., 1965, Table 8.

<sup>53</sup>See V. Cubitt and R. C. Riddell, *The Urban Poverty Datum Line in Rhodesia*, Faculty of Social Studies, University of Rhodesia, 1974. If compared against the real wages for mine labourers in 1901-04, it would probably be true to say that labourers were little or no better off in 1974.

The rising trend in average wages for African mineworkers and the pattern of wage stratification in the postwar period thus reflected changes that occurred in the production requirements of an increasingly monopolistic industry. Concentration in the production process led to the squeezing out of small producers and local capital. The State had to accommodate this trend by providing less for the interests of the local smallworker-owners and catering more for the requirements of foreign capital. In turn, mechanization led to the development of class of semi-skilled African operatives and higher wages in order to increase productivity.<sup>54</sup> Labour stabilization took place as the turnover of labour in the higher grades was reduced. Most workers in the labouring classes, however, remained caught in the low wages syndrome of the past. By the 1970's the extent of peasant under-development was far advanced in the local economy. This enabled minimum wages to be kept at a low level, a policy in part resulting from the resulting from the policies of the A.M.W.U., and backed by the strong resistance of the Chamber of Mines to any change.<sup>55</sup> Workers employed by small producers were denied even these low levels of wages protection, at least until they were brought under the Agreement in August, 1975. 'Labour shortages' in this sector did not lead to substantial wage revisions as smallworkers faced severe profitability constraints and the African Labour Regulations Act operated to reduce the incidence of competitive bidding amongst employers.<sup>56</sup> The bulk of African workers, including many in the semi-skilled grades, did not receive wages enabling them to meet the costs of reproduction of their labour for employers. As a result of these wage policies based on 'primitive accumulation', many workers had to retain homesteads in the rural areas and seek income supplementation from non-employment sources. The low-wage system was also associated with continued foreign migrant proletarianization, poor conditions of employment and 'extra-economic' forms of control in order that rapid accumulation could take place under a system of peripheral capitalism.

### Foreign African Workers and Cheap Mine Labour Supplies

One essential element in the managerial strategy to keep wages low and below the cost of reproduction of labour was the continued maintenance of a high level of dependence on foreign labour supplies. The dependence originated from the earliest period of capitalist mining in Rhodesia. In the postwar period mine owners lobbied the State, with other producers, to set

<sup>54</sup>See Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Secretary*, 1945, p.74; also C.M., *Annual Report*, 1967.

<sup>55</sup>See A.M.W.U., Submission on Reasons for Raising the Minimum Wage Rates for Workers in Labouring Grades in the Mining Industry Under the N.I.C. Agreement, 1974 (mimeo), for details on the 1974 negotiations. The Chamber of Mines offered 28 cents per shift for labourers.

<sup>56</sup>African Labour Regulations Act (Chapter 100) 1911, Section 21.



up the R.N.L.S.C. After 1947 the industry employed foreign contracted labour, a practice which ceased only in the early 1960's by which time a surplus of cheap local labour was available. Throughout the period employers hired 'free flow' foreign migrant labour as low wages for the labouring classes meant that the industry had to remain dependent on foreign 'free flow' workers, even though the numbers of unskilled African workers entering Rhodesia diminished after the 'New Economic Policy' of the post-1958 period.

State controls over foreign labour were resisted by the Chamber of Mines in order to ensure the minimization of labour costs. The Foreign Labour Employment Tax of 1961 did not receive the approval of mine owners, who applied for exemption from the tax, though it only applied to non-Federal Africans (at a rate of £1 per month).<sup>57</sup> As a result of the objections raised against it, it was withdrawn after only one year of application. The introduction of the 'Closed Labour Areas' policy at the same time, upon the implementation of which the Chamber of Mines was consulted, did not have a disadvantageous effect upon the supply of cheap labour to mines since its principal aim was to exclude certain foreign workers from urban employment. The Chamber raised no objection to this element of State foreign labour policy as it was not designed to hamper the industry's 'engagement of special classes of labour'.<sup>58</sup> However it did continue to resist other pressures from the State on its foreign labour policy.<sup>59</sup> By 1965 the industry was still 60 percent dependent on foreign African workers, 20 percent of whom came from outside the ex-Federal territories of Malawi and Zambia.<sup>60</sup> Mining employment policy had changed by this stage in order to accommodate *gradually* the need to cope with rising domestic unemployment without jeopardizing cheap labour supplies. A number of large mines adopted a policy giving preferences to Rhodesian applicants when recruiting. This was made easier by the larger number of Rhodesian Africans who were offering their labour to employers at rates which previously would not have attracted workers locally. The squeeze on the peasant economy was having effect and with the growing African unemployment crisis, after the establishment of a Committee to look into Farm and Mine Labour in 1969 by the Ministry of Labour, the State applied further pressures on mining employers to change their foreign labour employment policy.<sup>61</sup> The Chamber of Mines was asked 'to encourage its members to increase the indigenous content of their labour force'.<sup>62</sup> Many mine workers resisted the pressure and kept to their previous policy. They

<sup>57</sup>C.M. *Annual Report*, 1961, p.11.

<sup>58</sup>C.M. *Annual Report*, 1962, p.12.

<sup>59</sup>See C.M.J., November 1964, p.25.

<sup>60</sup>C.M. *Annual Report*, 1965.

<sup>61</sup>For details on other reasons for this pressure, see C.M.J., March, 1971, p.31.

<sup>62</sup>C.M., *Annual Report*, 1971, p.6.

argued that they 'could not support any proposal that mines be asked to activity reduce the foreign content of their labour forces by discharging existing employees'. Foreign workers (many of whom had been on the mines 10 years or more) were indispensable to the low cost production system in many large mines, especially as a large proportion of the foreign African labour force belonged to the low paid labouring class<sup>63</sup>

By 1969 the mining industry was still recruiting only half its labour force locally. It had kept to its policy of allowing only 'natural wastage' to effect the foreign/local African content of its labour force. This policy continued up to 1974. At the end of that year an important set of events occurred in Southern Africa — Malawi's withdrawal of contract labour supplies from South Africa, the de-colonization of Mocambique under a socialist government, large strikes on South African gold mines, the development of collusion between the contract labour-supplying, peripheral-States to Southern Africa, and an accentuation of the socio-economic and political crisis in Rhodesia.<sup>64</sup> Under these circumstances the South African government arranged (through the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) for Rhodesia to become a supplier of African contract labour to South Africa. An Agreement was signed and up to 50,000 one-year contractees were to be made available from amongst workers who, at least in the year before contract, had not worked in the Rhodesian mining industry. The decision was made without consulting the Chamber of Mines. Mine employers objected strongly to the State initiative since it could potentially jeopardize their supply of cheap labour. By December 1975, however, about 8,500 Rhodesian Africans had been recruited by WENELA for South African mines with no visible adverse effect on the Rhodesian mine labour supply position. Indeed, initial conflicts between Rhodesian and South African mines appear to have been resolved.

### Conditions of Employment and 'Extra-Economic' Controls

The conditions of employment for African mineworkers reflected the wage stratification patterns and were related to production requirements. For employers to maximize profits and reduce labour costs, African workers — especially in the labouring grades — had to experience austere conditions of employment. Many of these conditions were designed to ensure a high degree of social control by employers, allowing them to exercise discretionary power over the large non-wage element of earnings (35 percent of earnings was paid

<sup>63</sup>See C.M.J., March, 1974, p.21, where it is noted that there were 'still a number of mines with an alien "content" in excess of 75 percent'.

<sup>64</sup>See the following sources as well as Chapter 4: *Rhodesia Herald*, 6 November, 1974; *Rhodesia Herald*, 7 November 1974; and *Business Herald*, 14 November, 1974.

in kind in 1971)<sup>65</sup> Payment in kind accrued to workers through various 'extra wage' relationships with employers so 'tying' low wage workers to mining employment.

Various non-wage benefits, which accrued directly to workers, and over which management had no control, were minimized as far as was compatible with minimum statutory or socio-economic requirements. These were: pension benefits, sick leave provisions and accident and death benefits.

Prior to 1959 there were no statutory provisions made for gratuities or pensions for African mineworkers and few employers provided these benefits. Smallworkers in particular almost wholly avoided these labour costs since they were exempted from Part II of the Mineworkers Agreement. When they were brought under the Agreement the statutes provided were small — for example, \$20 for a worker who had provided 10 years of continuous service. The first Agreement covering African workers (1961-63) provided for semi-skilled and unskilled labourers to receive statutory gratuity benefits of either one of two kinds. Workers who had been 'continuously employed' with the same employer (or different mines under the control of the same head office) for more than 10 years, but less than 20 years, were entitled to a minimum gratuity of £1 for each completed *year* of continuous service *if* the service of employment was terminated on the grounds of physical or mental incapacity (provided ill health was not due to the worker's own wilful neglect, fault or carelessness). This meant that workers in Grades 2 and 3 who wished to retire before 1981 received no *entitlement* of a gratuity and those who were forced to leave their jobs for medical reasons could only expect a statutory provision equivalent to 2 shillings for each month of continuous service. In order to promote labour stabilization the second part of the scheme granted statutory gratuities to all workers who wished to retire once they had completed 20 years continuous service and provided they could, upon proof of a medical certificate, demonstrate that they were either mentally or physically incapacitated or were older than 50 years of age. Entitlement to retirement with a gratuity was thus only made *possible* after 20 years of work and then only if the worker had begun employment after 29 years of age. To qualify for a gratuity, if work had begun at (say) 17 years of age (service as a juvenile — below 17 years — was not counted), the worker would have had to complete 33 years of continuous service. The provisions (£25 gratuity for 20 years service and £70 for 35 years employment) were of only marginal benefit to retiring employees and were primarily geared to the promotion of labour stabilization. Redundancy payments, e.g. upon closure of the mine, were designed to be of minimal cost to employers (here employees of 15-20 years

<sup>65</sup>Communication to the author from C.S.O. (LS/3/01), 12 January, 1973.

standing were to be given a gratuity of £1 for each year of continuous employment).

The 1970 provisions (which were also incorporated into the 1975 Agreement, and will presumably apply for some years to come) were an improvement upon the 1961 arrangements — as they were in other industries — but not much so. All workers who had completed 10 years of continuous service received a \$20 minimum gratuity (a provision introduced in 1964). The rate for 20 years work rose to \$80 (only a slight improvement in real terms after adjustment for inflation since 1961) and the 35 year award was \$490. In the case of persons over 50 years of age the gratuity was to be increased by 20 percent, or \$2 for each completed year of service whichever was the greater. The same arrangements were made for workers receiving less than \$30 monthly under the Staff Agreement.<sup>66</sup> As in other industries, benefits were forced to rise to meet the growing demand that employers bear a higher portion of the costs of post-employment subsistence consumption.

Benefits and pensions for semi-skilled workers were substantially better than those paid to the labouring classes.<sup>67</sup> This reflected the degree of difficulty employers had in attracting and replacing these workers in production under conditions of expansion, the need to provide for permanent labour stabilization outside of the reserves, and the greater bargaining power of the semi-skilled grades in the A.M.W.U. From 1959-68 these workers (Grades B and C) were excluded, like labourers, from the Mining Industry Pension Fund by the stipulation that only workers who received more than \$60 fell under the provisions of the Fund. Before 1959 Africans were not eligible for the Fund Agreement negotiated by the A.M.W.U. and M.O.S.S.A. with the Chamber of Mines in 1952. The Rhodesian Mines Benefit Fund, negotiated at the N.I.C., was introduced to cope with the needs of the upper stratum of the African mineworker class who earned between \$30 and \$60 per month (i.e. \$1.20 and \$2.35 per shift). The Benefit Fund thus catered specifically for semi-skilled operatives and staff and deliberately excluded lower paid assistants and labourers. At the outset only 1,600 members were incorporated in the Fund. By 1974 there were 2,500 members. The benefits to members excluded those previously provided under the old gratuities system. Provision was made for upward class mobility so that once workers' earnings exceeded \$60 monthly they became eligible for the N.I.C. Pension Fund.

In the case of accident or death the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act applied.<sup>68</sup> The Act became 'non-racial' after 1959, but the

<sup>66</sup>See *Industrial Agreement: Mining Industry (Staff Employees)*, Government Notice No. 68 of 1972).

<sup>67</sup>See N.I.C. *Rhodesian Mines Benefit Fund*, 1974.

<sup>68</sup>See Workmen's Compensation Act (Chapter 248) 1959.

practical application of its provisions had the effect of gearing benefits to the inequalitarian wage structure. This was disadvantageous for the lower strata of the labour force and in the case of the mining industry the effect was to reduce the costs of compensation paid by the State (but funded by employers under Section 87), especially in the case of serious accidents which were most prevalent amongst the labouring classes.

The death, disease and accident rate among African workers in Rhodesian mines was 'traditionally' extremely high even though it fell later from its high pre-war levels.<sup>69</sup> In 1930, for example, the death rate per mille from disease was 15.15 and from accidents 2.16.<sup>70</sup> The resultant death rate per mille for disease and accident was thus 17.31 for Africans as against 7.36 for European workers. At this time 69 percent of *all* African workers experienced some kind of disease and 28 percent were prey to accident in *each* year.

These levels remained high whilst 'rations' remained sparse, labour was plentiful, wage costs were low, and there was little employer or State incentive to invest in hospital facilities. It was only with the rise in wage rates after 1938 that conditions changed markedly. By 1946 the death rate per mille for disease and accident was down to 8.52 per annum though the African accident rate was still much higher than that of whites. By 1974 the fatality rate was even lower largely due to improved medication, higher wages, and the decline in the relative importance of the labouring class as mechanization was extended. Mining was still hazardous for African workers, however, as demonstrated by the Wankie disaster of 1972, in which over 400 Africans lost their lives.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, as regards medical facilities, mines took considerably greater measures to ensure the health of their labour force as many more workers became semi-skilled and not easily replaceable in production at short notice. The 'pool' of casual day labour or unemployed workers that was found in the vicinity of most large mines usually consisted of unskilled labourers.<sup>72</sup> The provision of health facilities was conditional upon employment and mine clinics operated for mine employees (and their families in order to encourage labour stabilization). This provision, as with education provided through the employer-controlled mine school system, created 'non-wage' ties of dependence

<sup>69</sup>See I. R. Phimister, *African Labour Conditions*, Department of History, University of Rhodesia, unpublished, 1975; and C. Van Onselen, *Conditions in the Mine Compounds*, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, unpublished, 1974, for details on the period up to 1934.

<sup>70</sup>Data extracted from Southern Rhodesia, *Statistical Year Book 1942*, Tables 123, 124, and 125.

<sup>71</sup>For details see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October, 1973; also C.M., *Annual Report*, 1972, p.5, where it is noted that there was no difficulty in meeting the 'shortage' created by the disaster.

<sup>72</sup>The Unemployment Insurance Bill was opposed by the Chamber of Mines. See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1962, p.12.

between workers and the mining enterprise and enabled 'extra-economic' forms of social control to be applied by management.<sup>73</sup>

Paternalist labour policies were central to the employer strategy of keeping workers 'tied' within the confines of a cheap labour system. Such a system provided a greater degree of social control over labour than would have been possible under a system of pure wage-relations. In the 1930's and 1940's, for instance, employers widely advertised their paternalist benefits for labour in journals such as the *Bantu Mirror* in order to demonstrate the superior quality of mine life as compared to those conditions which pertained on farms and in South Africa. The Cam and Motor mine in 1938 claimed that its 2,250 workers were all 'happy', comfortably housed and well-fed.<sup>74</sup> The Globe and Phoenix laid stress on its schools, sports facilities, Native Welfare Society, and the opportunity for juveniles (between 8-12 years) to engage in 'lightwork' for 1/- to 5/- monthly (including food, uniforms and blankets). No Sunday work took place on the mine which boasted its own 'hospital', its own 'African leaders' and 200 married housing units for its 1000 male workers. Wankie Collieries, with a population of 7,387 Africans, (1,390 females and 1,719 children), emphasized that one meal daily was given in addition to the 'ration' scale, that leave was available when applied for, and that most workers were granted small gardens to till in order to supplement wages. On the Gaika Mine, workers were even given mealie seeds for their plots. On the Sherword Star Mine, workers were allowed to wash and fish in the nearby river and it was mentioned specifically that no restrictions were placed on where workers should purchase their commodities. The Rhodesian Chrome Mines, aware that the combination of low wages and the mine store credit system was disliked by workers (because debt 'tied' workers to the mine), advertised the fact that credit given at the mine store could not be marked on the worker's ticket. Similarly, the Wanderer Mine promised not to deduct store debts from the pay packet. Nearly all mines provided beer halls for recreation and simultaneously enforced severe restrictions on the 'illegal' petty production of local brews.

These and other long standing practices continued to prevail in mining compounds. Moyo, for instance, has written on the conditions at Shabanie Mine in the 1960's and has shown how paternalism was functional to the low wage system and social control.<sup>75</sup> Housing was 'tied' to continued em-

<sup>73</sup>The supply of rudimentary education has been an important attraction. Not all mine owners have been enthusiastic about supplying education, however. See *Bikita Minerals Newsletter*, January, 1967: 'The Company is here to mine minerals, not to build schools for children.'

<sup>74</sup>See *Bantu Mirror*, 11 June, 1938; *Bantu Mirror*, 16 July 1938; *Bantu Mirror*, 13 August, 1938; *Bantu Mirror*, 22 October, 1939; *Bantu Mirror*, 10 June, 1939, for details.

<sup>75</sup>Southern Rhodesia, Official Yearbook 1952, *op.cit.*, p.525.

ployment on the mine even though in some cases the 'African mine compound homes were just a small degree better than . . . traditional mud huts'.<sup>76</sup> Houses supplied by mines were typically 'bare, dark and ugly', without lighting, washing facilities or furnishings. Often they were built by workers themselves.<sup>77</sup> Tenure was related to the job and loss of employment meant not only loss of subsistence but immediate loss of accommodation for the worker and his family.<sup>78</sup> Similar provisions applied in respect of school education for the children of mineworkers. The semi-skilled grades often obtained slightly better conditions, privileges and fringe benefits. Inside the compound, the authority of mine management remained dominant and, through compound policemen and policewomen, substantial control was exercised over the daily lives of workers.<sup>79</sup>

Some of the extremely rigorous controls that characterized the pre-war compound systems in Rhodesia were relaxed or removed as the needs of different classes of worker had to be accommodated, higher wages for the semi-skilled grades reduced the need for an austere regime over all workers, fewer contract workers were employed, and the existence of widespread unemployment in Rhodesia, as well as in neighbouring territories, affected the formation of a 'captive labour force'.<sup>80</sup> Paternalist labour policies remained at the core of mine labour practices, however, even though the Chamber of Mines acknowledged that, under pressure from the State and 'the advanced African', the phasing out of paternalism was 'inevitable'.<sup>81</sup> Even so, retention of the system was still necessary to regulate the unskilled labouring classes and provide 'extra-economic' forms of control over 'illegal' labour organization, 'wildcat' strikers, and frustrated low-wage workers. The 'ticket system' was done away with by all but the smallest mines or the most 'unprogressive' employers. Social welfare departments became 'Africanized' on a number of mines. Economic rentals were charged for housing in certain cases (after first raising wages and ensuring satisfactory provisions for the termination of leases) and the 'rations' system, a source of conflict with nearly all African workers from before the war, was converted, by some larger mines, into a system whereby workers could elect to take stipulated cash payments *in lieu*.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>77</sup>Southern Rhodesia, Official Yearbook 1952, *op.cit.*, p.525.

<sup>78</sup>See A.M.W.U., Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting, 1973, p.16 (mimeo), for complaints about this aspect of housing policy.

<sup>79</sup>See Edgar Moyo, *op.cit.*, for details. Also see Charles Van Onselen, *Sex and Social Control in the Rhodesian Mine Compounds, 1900-1933*, Workshop on the Economic and Social History of Southern Africa, Oxford University, 1974 (mimeo), for a useful historical perspective.

<sup>80</sup>The phrase is that of the President of the A.M.W.U. (Mr. H. B. Bloomfield) in *Rhodesia Herald*, 3 December, 1974.

<sup>81</sup>C.M., *Annual Report*, 1961, p.23.

These conditions did not apply on all mines and even where they applied, social control over workers by *management* was not dispensed with.

Employer insistence on the 'ration' system was deeply resented by African workers. It not only made workers and their families dependent on management for food, but also enabled many mines to lower labour costs by discriminating in 'rations' allocations against married workers. Prior to the 1961 Agreement all decisions in respect of 'rations' were made at the employer's discretion. Most employers followed 'traditional' practice and organized their 'rations' policy on the basis of the 1911 Mining Rations Scale (as regulated in Government Notice No. 350 of 1911).<sup>82</sup> Most gave 'rations' but did so uniformly to 'single' and 'married workers (with or without dependents)'. As the need for labour stabilization increased, more employers provided double 'rations' for married workers.

When the 1961 Agreement was negotiated by the A.M.W.U., the 1911 scale (marginally amended in 1935) was inserted, virtually verbatim, into the Agreement. These 'rations' included 1½ lbs. of mealie meal daily, 2 lbs. of beans per week, 2½ lbs. of meat weekly, 2 lbs. of fresh vegetables weekly and 1 lb of shelled peanuts per week.<sup>83</sup> Employers could apply under Section 39 of the Mining Health and Sanitation Regulations (1949) for permission to pay daily paid employees an allowance of not less than \$1.10 per month *in lieu* of 'rations'. The 1964 Agreement added 3½ oz. of salt to the scale, provided greater flexibility for employers by allowing them to provide alternative types of food as 'rations' and ensured that all night-shift workers were given one pint of hot soup, coffee, cocoa or tea.<sup>84</sup> The A.M.W.U.'s confrontation with mine owners at the Industrial Court in 1963 also changed the 'ration' system by entrenching the right of wives of Category B, C and D. daily paid workers to receive some 'rations'. The solution proposed by the Court in an effort to reach a compromise between the Chamber of Mines and A.M.W.U. was eventually incorporated in to the Agreement. It placed an obligation upon employers to provide one half the normal ration *scale* (not actual rations provided) or the equivalent thereto, for the worker's wife *if* the wife was living with the permission of the employer on mine property. The result did not in itself lead to substantial changes since many wives could not stay with their husband (because wages were too low or housing supplied did

<sup>82</sup>Southern Rhodesia, *Official Yearbook of the Colony of Southern Rhodesia No. 3 1932*, Salisbury, p.665.

<sup>83</sup>S.R.G.N. No. 181 of 1961. The alternative provisions allowed for rupoko, mabele, inyouti or rice to be substituted for mealie meal, fish for meat in the case of 'the non-meat-eating races', and extra meat *in lieu* of vegetables where the latter were not available.

<sup>84</sup>*Mining Industry: Industrial Agreement (Mineworkers)*, Government Notice No. 398 of 1964.



not permit it) and employers were able to control the proportion of workers legally permitted to have dependents with them in the compound.

'Rations' thus remained a central issue in the conflict between management and worker (as in the case of the 1964 Wankie strike) and also a nexus around which workers could vent grievances and mobilize others against management policies in general. By 1972 nearly 20,000 of the 50,000 African workers in the industry, mostly in the labouring grades, were still 'tied' to the 'rations' system. Workers objected to the 'rations' system because they believed that management were maintaining the system at their expense, i.e. by reducing labour costs through the provision of inferior and bony meat, badly ground mealie meal and polluted vegetables.<sup>85</sup> The A.M.W.U. President agreed with the widespread complaints coming from mineworkers. Despite this the Anglo American Corporation, one of the largest employers, continued to provide all its workers with 'rations' in 1972 (except at Wankie Colliery where major strikes had resulted in the incorporation of the cash equivalent in the wage). One reason why employers retained the system was the fact that many large mining capital interests had large investments in plantation production and were able to use the cheap commodities produced in this sector to finance the costs of 'rations' subsistence for mineworkers. A high level of exploitation of farmworkers thus enabled the cheap labour system to be especially efficient.

By 1970 the value of the 'rations' scale was assessed at \$6.00 monthly for 'single' workers, (20 percent above the 1961 level in current prices). It remained so valued even in 1973 after the Agreement had been extended. In real terms (adjusting for inflation of 34 percent in African food prices from 1961-73) this meant that those workers who chose cash *in lieu* of rations were, as a result, worse off in 1974.<sup>86</sup> This is perhaps one reason why many employers chose to adopt the 'progressive' policy of switching the payments system onto a cash basis. It also indicates the way in which the 'rations' valuation procedure was used, partly as a result of A.M.W.U. neglect, to re-negotiate the value of the scale and so reduce the impact of the 1963 Industrial Court decision on labour costs. The valuation of the 'rations' scale at 27 cents *per shift* in the 1974-75 wage re-negotiations (agreed upon by the A.M.W.U. and the Chamber of Mines) only just restored the value of the 1961 cash equivalent of \$5.00 (1961 prices). This was because the revised

<sup>85</sup>See Edgar Moyo, *op.cit.*, for example. This was also one reason why the State regulations provided that mealie meal given as 'rations' should be well ground and sifted and 'at least 75 percent of any sample must pass through a sieve of a 30-inch mesh'. RGN No. 488 of 1970.

<sup>86</sup>There are some technical objections which could be raised about using an urban cost of living index to deflate money wages in mining employment. It is not thought that these would seriously invalidate the use of the index, however.

monthly value of the 'rations' scale (assuming a 26 shift month), of \$7.02, only just met a 40 percent food price increase recorded in the African Consumer Price Index.<sup>87</sup>

The other aspect of the 'rations' scale that attracted worker objection was the inadequacy of the minimum 'rations' in meeting basic subsistence food requirements. The 1975 negotiated 'rations' value (for all single workers and those in that permission to have wives with them), for instance, converted to a daily equivalent of 26.0 cents, was only just adequate to cover the minimum subsistence food requirements of a single adult man of 26.2 cents (updated to September, 1975 prices) as estimated by the authors of the 1974 Poverty Datum Line Report.<sup>88</sup> Minimum food requirements for all other sizes of 'household' unit, i.e. for most workers, were far greater than this and came nowhere near being met by the 1963 Industrial Court ruling.

The 'rations' system was extended to 'Staff employees' too, but with certain significant differences in application, variations which reflected the differentiation within the African working class. Technically, staff employees were entitled to 'rations' determined by the 'rations' scale in the Mineworkers' Agreement. However, almost universally, Staff employees were able to choose cash *in lieu* of 'rations'. Here the valuation of 'rations' for Staff employees was (inexplicably) set at a far higher level (30 cents *daily* in 1968) than that of mineworkers.<sup>89</sup> This 'privilege' was functional in the system of class division and social control in the compound. The staff workers who benefited were compound police, welfare workers, cashiers, security guards, firemen, clerical staff, health employees and supervisors — workers who formed a bureaucratic elite within the compound social structure and who were necessary for maintenance of the compound's system of social control.

In this system, manipulation of the social order was also necessary. A certain amount of petty commodity production, especially when practised by wives alone, was encouraged by management, e.g. handicrafts.<sup>90</sup> Nearly

<sup>87</sup>See Rhodesia, Monthly Digest, *op.cit.*, for details of the composition of the African consumer price index.

<sup>88</sup>V. Cubitt and R. C. Riddell, *op.cit.* Of the 2,740 African mineworkers in 1973 who were paid in cash only, 6.6 percent received less than \$10 monthly, 35.4 percent received between \$10 and \$20 monthly and only 13.5 percent were paid in excess of \$30. See C.S.O., Cash Wage Distribution, *op.cit.*

<sup>89</sup>R.G.N. No. 68 of 1972.

<sup>90</sup>C.M., *Annual Report*, 1963, p.9. Controls have also been applied, e.g. hawkers at Bikita mine have had to have written permission to pursue their trade in the mine village. *Bikita Minerals Newsletter*, September, 1967.

all mines encouraged some form of food production in mine villages.<sup>91</sup> A bureaucratic class of gangleaders, compound police and functionaries, however, enabled management to control 'illegal' activities, prostitution, beer-brewing, dagga selling, 'loafers', agitation, petty theft, and to contain the socio-economic problems associated with the 'pool' of unemployed and casual labourers that most mines permitted to exist inside or within the vicinity of the compound. These petty bureaucrats were specifically trained to meet the requirements of mine owners, especially the large-scale producers.<sup>92</sup>

'Extra-economic' controls were essential too, for State and employer control of collective worker mobilization, African trade unionism and strike action. Organized African trade unions experienced great difficulty in successfully penetrating the mining compounds. The nascent unionism that the I.C.U. attempted to foster in the compounds in the 1920's and 1930's was successfully thwarted by State and management policies. After the first major postwar strike (at Wankie in 1954) the larger mining employers instituted a Works Committee system *within* their company organizations (often built around a Village Elder system with a great stress on ethnicity) in order to co-opt worker pressures for change in the cheap labour system. The Committees, begun in the early 1950's, functioned up to 1960 when they were superseded by the A.M.W.U.<sup>93</sup> On some mines where the A.M.W.U. had not formed branches, or where management had operated the Committees, they remained operative until as late as 1970. The Committees were a basis for African recruitment into the A.M.W.U. after 1959, when with assistance from the Chamber of Mines the (later) 'multi-racial' union sought to extend its membership to include Africans, especially in the semi-skilled grades.<sup>94</sup> The M.O.S.S.A. received similar support from management. The change in the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1959 thus left African labourers little better off, insofar as unionization was concerned, than before. Indeed, in having their 'rights' in the collective bargaining procedure usurped by a wholly undemocratic union which was controlled by an alliance between the artisanal labour aristocracy and a dependent class of semi-skilled workers, the labouring classes were dominated by both capital *and* the upper strata of labour.

<sup>91</sup>At Bikita Mine 3/4 acres were provided to each *married* family unit; this amounted to 120 acres *in toto*. Maize seed was bought for workers by the management. African workers were exhorted to work as a 'community'. The Company ploughed the fields in 1966 but required the workers to do so subsequently. The Company promised workers land as long as they worked on the mine. See *Bikita Minerals Newsletter*, November, 1966.

<sup>92</sup>Compound police for the mining industry as a whole have been specially trained by Anglo-American Corporation. See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1959. Among their tasks has been the job of regulating 'beer privileges'. At Bikita mine, for instance, married workers have been allowed to take 1 gallon of beer weekly out of the mine compound. This benefit has not been available to single workers. See *Bikita Minerals Newsletter*, November, 1966.

<sup>93</sup>C.M. *Annual Report*, 1959, p.v.

<sup>94</sup>C.M. *Annual Report*, 1960, p.9.

Ideological controls were also utilized by management to divert worker agitation into acceptable channels. Elders' Committees, ethnic associations, welfare bodies, and even religious organizations were given substantial aid in their activities in the compound. The managements of certain mines also encouraged ethnic and linguistic divisions in the compound system which tended to have ethnic groups housed together.<sup>95</sup> The fostering of 'tribalism' helped divert attention away from the common position of all workers in relation to capital. Management cultivated acceptable 'stereotypes' for workers to emulate. For example, in the late 1960's, the management-sponsored *Bikita Minerals Newsletter* carried a number of profiles of 'Personalities of the Month', laying great stress on the need for workers to 'hold their jobs', for 10 years at least, avoid disputes, maintain 'traditional' customs, co-operate with supervisors, behave well, always be disciplined, work hard and avoid becoming 'a rolling stone'.<sup>96</sup> The underlying message in such exhortations was clear and geared to the productivity requirements of the producers and the social controls needed under the low wage system if production was to proceed smoothly.

None of these social controls could stop 'illegal' strikes, however, and in the event of these erupting, management itself was powerless. They relied on the State not only to make strike action 'illegal' in the first instance, but also to deal with strikers after the event. The management were fortunate in being able to rely upon second prop after 1959 — the A.M.W.U. The character of this union was clearly exemplified in the attitude of its officials to African strikers and its boast that it had never called a strike in the history of the union. The union's incapacity for action, 'responsible' conservatism and internal composition, made it unattractive to most African workers, particularly amongst the labouring class. These aspects of the A.M.W.U. can be illustrated from a consideration of its role during the two most important postwar strikes in the Rhodesian mining industry, both at Wankie Collieries, in 1964 and 1974.

The 1964 Wankie strike lasted 10 days. It involved a vast majority of the 4,500 African workers at the mine, 2,500 of whom were from Northern Rhodesia and were closely associated with the United National Independence Party (U.N.I.P.), the newly appointed African ruling party during the first phase of Zambian de-colonization. The strikers were joined by 500 'un-employed' persons who were allowed to reside around the mine (being given

<sup>95</sup>See, for example, Native Labour Advisor, A Report upon the Native Labour Position in the Central African Colonies with Special Rereference to Southern Rhodesia, 1950 (mimeo): 'The Mashona is not a mining type, the Ndebele is kin to the Zulu and the foreign Natives are all Natives employed in the South.' p.34.

<sup>96</sup>See *Bikita Minerals Newsletter* (Nov. 1966 — July 1969 inclusive).

one free meal daily) as a 'pool' of casual day labour. The strike began over enforced 'rations' and the absence of an option to take cash *in lieu*. Most of the semi-skilled workers came out on strike. The strike was controlled by the police and local reservists (as was an earlier strike at Arcturus Mine in January, 1964). The A.M.W.U. President arrived at Wankie to talk to the workers, even though the A.M.W.U. had officially condemned the strike as 'illegal', had disclaimed any liability or connection with it, and in any event, could claim less than 7 percent of the African workers at the mine as members. The management and the State decided to call in the A.M.W.U. 'to restore order and working conditions'<sup>97</sup> A.M.W.U. officials (both white and black — the latter from the semi-skilled and staff grades) attempted to pacify the workers by asking that they return to work pending an investigation of the quality of 'rations' provided. The meeting at which the A.M.W.U. officials addressed the workers broke up in disorder. Further meetings also ended in rejection by the workers of the A.M.W.U.'s presence and suggestions. Riots ensued which were put down by the police. The A.M.W.U. condoned strike breaking and assisted with the supply of manpower to keep production going, a policy for which they were resolutely condemned by the Southern Rhodesian African Trade Union Congress.<sup>98</sup> In the end, cash *in lieu* was provided and the value of rations was raised by 40 percent to £3.10.0 per month for single persons. A year later, in recalling what was described as 'an unpleasant little incident', the A.M.W.U. President summed up the union's role: 'I fear and shudder to think what the final outcome would have been if no trade union had been available as a mediator in this strike. It is good to note that the Wankie Management acknowledge the services rendered by this Association'.<sup>99</sup> This evaluation was consistent with the A.M.W.U.'s policy and exclusivist character in acting not on behalf of the bulk of workers, but as an instrument of mediation of the management and the State.<sup>100</sup>

A parallel incident was the 1974 Wankie strike over a wage dispute. Again, most of the labouring classes came out on strike and were joined before long by the domestic and essential services staff and a number of semi-skilled black workers did not participate. The A.M.W.U.'s officials arrived on the third day of the six-day strike after police action, shooting and arrests had failed to restrain the strikers.<sup>101</sup> A.M.W.U. meetings with workers were extremely rowdy. Ultimately, after a small 10 cents per shift offers, the strikers

<sup>97</sup>Data are taken from A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, May 1964; and *Rhodesia Herald* (June 1964).

<sup>98</sup>See the letters from and replies to T. E. Mswaka, General Secretary, Southern Rhodesian African Trade Union Congress, in A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, June, 1964.

<sup>99</sup>A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, June, 1965, p.15.

<sup>100</sup>For an appreciation of the A.M.W.U.'s responsible role' see *R.C.J.*, November, 1971, where the Minister of Labour, who castigated unionists who advocated strike section, held up the A.M.W.U. as an exemplary union.

<sup>101</sup>For a statement on the A.M.W.U.'s anti-strike policy and viewpoints, see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October, 1960.

returned to work. Once again the A.M.W.U. President claimed to have helped to bring the strike to an early end, much to the appreciation of management.<sup>102</sup>

Other mining strikes (e.g. at Shabani in 1972) were dealt with in a similar manner. The Chamber of Mines and mine management (as well as the A.M.W.U. on occasions) typically regarded African strikes as 'politically motivated'.<sup>103</sup> This provided an ideological justification for the extensive use of police and violence in controlling strikes and for resisting worker demands. At no stage did the A.M.W.U. take up the demands of African strikers, even where nearly all workers on the mine were behind the protest. The instance of A.M.W.U. passivity during strikes was only one area in which the union whether consciously or otherwise, adversely affected African labouring interests. An important reason behind the poor socio-economic condition of mineworkers in Rhodesia thus resulted from the nature and policy of the A.M.W.U.

### The A.M.W.U. and Skilled Labour

The labour aristocracy in the mining industry consisted of two major parties: the artisanal, skilled and certified production workers, organized into the controlling hierarchy of the A.M.W.U., and the bureaucratic, supervisory and 'managerial class' of employees represented by the controlling elements in the M.O.S.S.A. Both these groups had some African members. Nevertheless semi-skilled African workers in both the A.M.W.U. and M.O.S.S.A. former a *subordinate* element amongst these socio-economic groups that dominate the formal trade union structures in the mining industry. The composition of these unions had important implications for both the African labouring and semi-skilled classes of workers.<sup>104</sup>

The roots of the labour aristocracy's control of the trade union apparatus pre-date the last war. As Phimister has explained, 'completely divorced from ownership of the means of production and with only their labour to sell,

<sup>102</sup>It may have been wholly co-occidental, but within a few months of the strike pay increases were announced for skilled workers at Wankie. Even the A.M.W.U. officials expressed surprise at the 'sudden' pay award. See *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 December, 1974.

<sup>103</sup>For an example of this perspective see C.M., *Annual Report*, 1972, p.5; also see the comments of the Secretary of the Chamber of Mines (Mr. K. Van der Plank) in *Rhodesia Herald*, 18 February, 1972.

<sup>104</sup>The A.M.W.U., for instance, has strenuously attempted to limit the size of the semi-skilled African working class. In the January, 1963 negotiations with the Chamber of Mines, for example, the A.M.W.U. agreed to permit 1,587 workers into Grade II; the Chamber wanted 4,418 workers so classified. See A.M.W.U., *Annual Costs of Proposals of the Chamber of Mines of Rhodesia (Inc.) and Annual Costs of Proposals of the Associated Mineworkers' Union*, 1963 (mimeo).

white miners were fully proletarianized earlier than the bulk of African mineworkers'.<sup>105</sup> They collaborated with management from the earliest years of production despite the fact that their struggle to organize skilled workers only resulted in union formation (in the Rhodesia Mine and General Workers' Association) in 1919. An employer offensive against the union, disunity amongst white workers in general, and difficult economic circumstances led to its demise in 1923. This situation continued until the formation of the A.M.W.U. in 1938. This was fostered by the high demand for skilled labour in expansionary conditions following the Depression, the 1934 Industrial Conciliation Act which gave collective bargaining rights to all organized white workers, the formation of a branch of the South African Mineworkers' Union in Que Que in 1937, and the political power of the labour representatives in the House of Assembly. In November, 1938, the State accepted the A.M.W.U. as having proprietary negotiating rights for the Colony. Branches of the A.M.W.U. were established quickly on all major mines. The conservative nature of the union was apparent from the outset: 'concern over (African competition) led to the involvement of the Associated Mine Workers in the 1941 division of the Rhodesia Labour Party into two antagonistic groups — the "non-racial" Southern Rhodesia Labour Party and the "exclusive" white socialist Labour Party to which the mineworkers' union pledged support'.<sup>106</sup>

After this distinctive de-radicalization of white working-class politics, white unionists through their unions and the Trades and Labour Council (which eventually became the Trade Union Congress), drifted increasingly towards the 'rightwing' of white politics in Rhodesia. By the early 1970's they held a political position approximately by the conservative elements in the Rhodesian Front and smaller fringe parties on its right flank, such as the Republican Alliance. As a group they became steadily *embourgeoisé* by postwar economic transformations and maintained an insecure position which relied upon cooperating in a *restrained* conflict with capital, dependence on the State for statutory protections, and careful intra-union control of the challenges from the semi-skilled and unskilled African working class. The demise of the smallworker tended to heighten this insecurity since the mobility that existed in earlier times (between self-employment on a smallworking and taking wage-employment) was restricted by monopolization in the industry and the more acute difficulties facing smallworker production in the 1970's as compared with the 1930's. This contributed to the strength of the A.M.W.U.

<sup>105</sup> I. R. Phimister, White Labour, Department of History, University of Rhodesia (mimeo), p.174. Phimister's point has relevance also to the post-1940 position. See also the history of the A.M.W.U. (as published by the union) in A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, March, 1959; in A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October, 1967.

<sup>106</sup> I. R. Phimister, White Labour, *op.cit.*

which, unlike many African unions, did not depend on international aid and recognition for support.<sup>107</sup>

The internal composition of the A.M.W.U. partly accounted for its conservatism, élitist character and monopolization by skilled workers. Up to 1959 only whites were members of the union, all on an equal membership footing. The 1959 Industrial Conciliation Act explicitly recognized legalized means whereby skilled workers could co-opt semi-skilled and unskilled workers into their membership, but in such a way as not to impair the control of the skilled workers over the union's affairs. Section 47 of the Act safeguarded this effective control by providing for different grades/classes of member and for the Grade I members to have a determining vote in appointing the union's executive. Union constitutions had to be approved by the Minister and by law had to ensure that the skilled grades effectively controlled the union. The question of a simple majority of members voting for an executive did not arise since each Grade (I, II and III) elected its own specified number of executive members and did not vote for any others. Grade I members were given a majority of the seats on the executive so electing *their* members to the prominent positions of General Secretary and President, and thereby controlling union policy.

Annual Congresses, where union policy was formulated and passed, were similarly loaded. In 1973, for instance, there were 15 Africans, representing workers in Grades II and III, out of 54 delegates to the Annual Congress, even though the A.M.W.U. *membership* 1974) comprised only 1,000 Grade I members (out of an eligible 1,424) and Grades II and III members numbered 4,422 (out of an eligible 38,194).<sup>108</sup> The large majority of National Executive Council members, including the President and all major posts in the union, were held by Grade I members. The majority, themselves drawn from Grades II and II, were in fact surface and underground labourers (2,600 out of a total union membership of 5,414), yet their claims were not prominent in A.M.W.U. affairs. At the A.G.M. in 1973, for instance, the wages of labourers were not even discussed nor any resolution related thereto considered.<sup>109</sup>

The occupational structure of the Grade I membership reflected the artisanal dominance in the union. Most of these members were fitters and turners, carpenters, welders, boilmakers, mechanics, electricians, bricklayers, machinists and drillers. The remainder were shift supervisors and clerical

<sup>107</sup>The A.M.W.U. has always sought international recognition, however. For details of its international connections see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, September, 1960. Nonetheless, at least since 1964, after the Wankie strike, the A.M.W.U. has been critical of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, June, 1964.

<sup>108</sup>A.M.W.U., *Membership as at March 1974* (mimeo).

<sup>109</sup>See A.M.W.U. Annual General Meeting 1973, *op.cit.*



staff. In most of these trades, the threat of fragmentation and fear of a widespread certification of skills through an expansion in the apprenticeship system were behind worker conservatism and insecurity. Grade II members were dominated by semi-skilled workers employed as 'Boss Boys', clerks, lorry drivers, hoist drivers, gangleaders, mill assistants, plant operators and artisan's assistants. These employees were in a position to gain from 'African advancement' schemes, 'fragmentation' of skilled work, and inroads into the mining bureaucracy, but only provided that the wage claims of labourers did not receive preference.

Union membership was concentrated on less than a dozen large mines. In 1968 nearly 90 percent of all union members were employed on 9 mines out of 62 to which Part II of the Agreement applied.<sup>110</sup> on 38 mines there were no formal branches or members. The remainder of the mines had a handful of members even though on some of these the work force was large. The degree of unionization amongst workers correlated directly with the level of skill. Higher skilled workers were effectively unionized and vice versa. A perverse union structure thus helped thwart the movement towards democratic unionism.

The alliance between skilled labour and the State, with the complicity of foreign capital (which dominated the Chamber of Mines and its negotiating strategy at N.I.C. level), combined with the internal conditions of the A.M.W.U. to produce highly beneficial socio-economic conditions for skilled workers in the mining industry.

The minimum wage rates and conditions of employment for Grade I workers improved tremendously after the first Agreement in 1941. This Agreement was not applicable to mining enterprises which produced an average gross output of less than £900 per mensem (i.e. most smallworkers).<sup>111</sup> This provision satisfied white miners, the Rhodesian Mining Federation (which represented small workers), and large-scale capital. Under the Agreement, skilled certified artisans were given a basic rate of 20/- per shift and semi-skilled workers received between 17/6 and 22/6 (e.g. assistants and hoist drivers respectively). Overtime rates were also included. The Agreement was re-negotiated in 1943, 1944, 1946, 1948 and throughout the 1950's at two-year intervals until by 1959, in the last Agreement struck before the Industrial Conciliation Act, the certificated journeymen in the industry were entitled to a minimum shift rate of 50/9d. Subsequent negotiations revised these rates further and by 1970 the minimum was \$7.00 per shift. The 1975 Agreement

<sup>110</sup>N.I.C., Number of Employees on Contributing Mines: Number of Associated Mine-workers Members on these Mines, May, 1968 (mimeo).

<sup>111</sup>See A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October 1940.

set this rate at \$12.00 per shift. These gains were in marked contrast to the stagnation in respect of minimum rates of pay for labourers. The 1974-75 negotiations were so organized by the A.M.W.U. that their effect was to widen further the gap between skilled/unskilled and skilled/semi-skilled workers. Certified journeymen were to be raised to \$12.00 per shift whilst most Grade II members were to receive a 50 cents to 90 cents rise.<sup>112</sup> Labourers' rates, as requested by the A.M.W.U., were to be set at a total of 40 cents per shift, a level which represented only a 30 percent improvement on the level at which the minimum rates had been set 14 years earlier.

Earnings moved steadily upwards after the Agreement was first negotiated. During the period in which the A.M.W.U. was responsible for African wages, the earnings of skilled workers rose especially sharply. In 1958, average European earnings in the mining industry were \$2,822 (which would have included M.O.S.S.A. members).<sup>113</sup> By 1973 the average earnings were the highest of all European employees (\$5,335). In 15 years an 85 percent increase had been achieved. The wage bill accruing to these workers had risen 125 percent, and although they represented less than 5 percent of all mineworkers, their wage payments accounted for 45 percent of all wages in the industry in 1973. By 1964 Grade I workers' rates had also become 'inflation-proofed' as a cost-of-living allowance applied to all but female earnings. Other important benefits of contract resulted from the skilled workers' strong bargaining position through the A.M.W.U.: pensions and children's allowances, for example.

Unlike labourers, skilled employees were not disadvantaged by the tendency of foreign capital to dominate the industry and pursue oligopsonistic labour policies. The high degree of union organization amongst skilled workers provided a substantial lever in their conflicts with mine owners. The price that capital had to pay for a high degree of exploitation of African mineworkers was the burden of supporting a necessary class of aristocratic workers. In the Rhodesian context they were a vital socio-economic force for the maintenance of a high *profitable* system of peripheral capitalism.<sup>114</sup>

### **Class, Race and the State**

The union formation process in the mining industry reflected the relations of various workers to the production system. As production requirements changed, so class divisions and their racial manifestations were transformed.

<sup>112</sup>See A.M.W.U., Industrial Agreement: Mineworkers, Draft of Agreement as Proposed by Associated Mineworkers of Rhodesia, 1974 (mimeo).

<sup>113</sup>Rhodesia, Monthly Digest, *op.cit.*

<sup>114</sup>Management has regularly argued that 'displaced' workers would be absorbed into higher grades as 'supervisors'. See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1960, for example.

The State played a significant mediating role in this adjustment process by designing labour legislation to allow for the management of the system in favour of the dominant groups.

Up to the 1950's there was little need for the State to concede to African mineworker pressure for all workers to be given collective bargaining rights. The compound system, together with social control provided by the State, was sufficient to contain African worker action, except in the instance of a few large strikes. However, the State was under substantial pressure to meet the demands of *organized* African labour — especially through the postwar confederations of labour (the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, the Southern Rhodesian Trade Union Congress and the Confederation of African Labour) and African nationalist pressure on exclusivism and legal discrimination through the Youth League, the African National Congress and the more broadly based National Democratic Party.

The State's strategy aimed at containing these pressures was to make the Industrial Conciliation Act 'non-racial', but *at the same time* to restrict its application. As far as mining was concerned it was acceptable to *both* foreign capital and the A.M.W.U. that African workers be co-opted within the legalized trade union system under the aegis of the *established* unions. Indeed, the A.M.W.U. had altered its constitution in 1954 in order to make membership into its ranks 'non-racial'.<sup>115</sup> The adoption of the principle of vertical unionism in the Act allowed the A.M.W.U. to dominate the whole industry in conjunction with the M.O.S.S.A., the representative of monthly paid employees which had been registered in 1947.

Both the artisanal and bureaucratic/professional union built the subsequent recruitment of members around the pre-existing Works Committee structures whose membership tended to be comprised of the conservative and semi-skilled side of the African labour movement in the compounds. In this task they were assisted by mineworkers who were equally desirous of containing any prospective union development amongst African workers. Indeed, even after the Act, the Committees continued to function, not in competition with the A.M.W.U. and the M.O.S.S.A., but in order to continue 'to train and accustom African mine workers to the recognized procedure and conduct of round table negotiations between labour and management'.<sup>116</sup> The A.M.W.U. quickly and easily shed its purely racial image and was encouraged to do so by the Chamber of Mines. Although limited by law, the composition of the National Executive Council was changed to include African members as representatives of different *classes* of worker. The African

<sup>115</sup>See A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, September, 1960, p.4.

<sup>116</sup>A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, November, 1959.

Executive members, as well as branch officials, subsequently played an important part in the union.

Grade II semi-skilled members were able to successfully utilize the union in pursuit of their own interests. Evidence of their relative strength was reflected for instance in the A.M.W.U. wage claim submitted to the Industrial Tribunal in 1975.<sup>117</sup> The B class workers' claims stood at \$2.50 to \$5.74 per shift and C class claims were \$1.07 to \$2.29. The labouring grades (class D) were to receive only a fraction of these amounts. The success of the A.M.W.U. controlling hierarchy in 'managing' the union was approved by mine management which regularly expressed the approval at the 'multi-racial' union arrangements that existed in the industry.<sup>118</sup>

The social basis of the A.M.W.U. was reflected too in the State sanctioned arrangements for contributions to the N.I.C., a statutory body funded by both employers and various classes of worker. Prior to 1959 only white mineworkers were under obligation to finance the N.I.C. from the labour side even though there were a few non-white union members at this time. Subsequently a differentiated levy was imposed. In 1961 skilled workers paid 2/- monthly and semi-skilled workers paid 3d monthly.<sup>119</sup> Unskilled labourers did not have to bear any charge. However, by 1964 levies of 2d monthly were introduced and placed on the labouring classes. Semi-skilled workers continued to pay the same amount and the skilled worker contribution rose to 2/6d. In 1970, after decimalization, the levies on semi-skilled and unskilled workers were effectively raised by the process of conversion from the sterling to the dollar system. In effect, this levy system shifted a disproportionate burden in the financing of the N.I.C. on to the labouring classes, as they stood to gain the least from it.<sup>120</sup>

The internal membership financing system again reflected the élitist structure of the A.M.W.U. Skilled workers paid more than semi-skilled workers and the unskilled workers' dues were set at the lowest level. However, since the union was not able to obtain 'open shop' provisions, whereby all workers (even non-members) would contribute to the union (the management rejected this demand in 1960), it had to rely on recruitment to ensure revenues.<sup>121</sup> Given the A.M.W.U.'s inclinations and past performance, it was

<sup>117</sup>A.M.W.U., Industrial Agreement: Mineworkers, Draft of Agreement, *op.cit.*

<sup>118</sup>See R.C.J., April 1964, p.25; and R.C.J., April 1970 (notably the comments of Mr R. S. Walker).

<sup>119</sup>See S.R.G.N. No. 181 of 1961; and R.G.N. No. 488 of 1970; also R.G.N. No. 398 of 1964.

<sup>120</sup>Determined on the basis of the 1970 breakdown of workers by Grade in A.M.W.U., Analysis of Labour by Sub-Categories as Contained in the Industrial Agreement Mineworkers), Government Notice No. 488 of 1970, November 1972 (mimeo).

<sup>121</sup>See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1960, p.9. On the reasons why the union wanted 'open shop' arrangements see A.M.W.U., G.R., September, 1960, p.6.

natural that skilled and semi-skilled workers would be the principal financiers of the union. In crises, like the 1963 Industrial Court action brought by the A.M.W.U. against the Chamber of Mines (which cost \$10,000), the A.M.W.U. arranged to draw a special levy from skilled workers, although it was also able to obtain \$1,000 from the Miners' International Federation.<sup>122</sup> The higher dues for skilled members were thus necessary where these workers dominated the union and received the major benefits from its continued existence. The A.M.W.U. failed in 1961 to get the Chamber of Mines to agree to the 'closed shop' principle in respect of Grade I workers alone (skilled journeymen).<sup>123</sup> This attempt to unionize *all* skilled workers followed on the failure to shift the union's financial burden increasingly on to the non-skilled employees and was also designed to bolster the degree of protection provided for the artisanal class through its control over the A.M.W.U. The additional protection, however, proved to be unnecessary since the State continued to insist upon the retention of section 47 of the Industrial Conciliation Act throughout the 1960-75 period.

The security and monopoly position of the artisanal class in the A.M.W.U. rested firmly on the State. The politics of this class were truly conservative and were rooted in the populist elements of white electoral politics, a group from which the Rhodesian Front emerged to take over government in 1962. Ministers were sympathetic to the A.M.W.U.'s case for protection of skilled workers. They regularly attended their Annual Congresses and there were close associations with the union stretching back to 1940 when an ex-trade unionist (Mr J. W. Keller) was Minister of Labour and previously had been one of the early organizers in the R.M.G.W.A., the A.M.W.U.'s predecessor before the Depression.<sup>124</sup> Union power, as opposed to foreign capital, represented artisanal bargaining power to a large extent in conditions where skilled workers and capital were in close mutual interdependence under the minority political system, despite the conflicts that marked the shifting boundaries of domination of the former by the latter.

### **Class Alliances: Capital and Skilled Labour**

The class alliances between capital and skilled workers were not without their antagonistic aspects. However, these conflicts were not of major importance to either group as they were overshadowed by the conflicts between capital and labour in general and between the ruling minority group and the needs of the African underclasses dependent for subsistence on the 'mining complex'.

<sup>122</sup>A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, June, 1964, p.8.

<sup>123</sup>C.M., *Annual Report*, 1961, p.10.

<sup>124</sup>See A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October, 1940, p.5.

The labour aristocracy had to maintain two sets of alliances within the system — one with foreign capital and another with local small-worker capital. Economic transformations in the postwar prior made the former more critical than the latter.

The A.M.W.U. policy towards large-scale capital was calculatedly hostile. Skilled workers were acutely conscious of their *class* conflict with capital especially over the threatening issue of 'African advancement'.<sup>125</sup> However, this conflict was restrained and conducted within the terms of the *status quo*. The union eschewed extra-legal action in the form of strikes or direct extra-parliamentary mobilization. The social relations of union members with management were not marked by violence, except for occasional outbursts of verbal abuse and temper, a situation in stark contrast to the actions taken by black miners during strikes. The A.M.W.U. elected to challenge the Chamber of Mines at both N.I.C. and Industrial Court level in the knowledge that it could rely on some State assistance to back its claims. The 1963 Court confrontation, which lasted 28 days, illustrates this point. Even though the Court reached a compromise between the A.M.W.U. and the Chamber over the definition of semi-skilled work and over reinforcement of the 'rate-for-the-job' and 'no-job-fragmentation' principles (the main issues in dispute), the union ultimately rejected the Court's decision and was able to obtain a further compromise from the Chamber, the results of which were embodied in the new trade Agreement of 1964.<sup>126</sup>

An important part of management strategy dominating the alliance with the labour aristocracy has been its policy of isolating artisanal workers in the A.M.W.U. from the bureaucratic, supervisory and professional employees in the M.O.S.S.A.<sup>127</sup> The publication of separate agreements in 1968 cemented this division. In addition to dividing skilled workers in this manner, the separate Agreement struck with the M.O.S.S.A. (which after 1959 incorporated African monthly paid employees) had the effect of dividing the semi-skilled classes between two competing unions. The opportunity to play one union off against another increased as the Chamber of Mines became the sole employer representative at the N.I.C. confronting a widely disparate grouping of worker representatives.

The M.O.S.S.A. was a creature of the postwar period. It too began as a 'European' union since at the time of inception the occupational categories

<sup>125</sup>See the criticisms of 'big finance' in A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, January, 1962, p.i; and A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, November, 1969, where criticisms are also made of 'Northern Rhodesian financial capital'.

<sup>126</sup>For details on the A.M.W.U.'s position see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, June, 1965, p.13; and A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, November, 1963. See also *R.C.J.*, April, 1963; and *R.C.J.*, November, 1963.

<sup>127</sup>For A.M.W.U. Criticisms of the M.O.S.S.A. see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, November, 1963.

for which it was registered were white-dominated. As stratification proceeded within the African labour force, more Africans (after 1959) were absorbed into the M.O.S.S.A. The union's membership drive was assisted by management. Africans were quickly raised to the M.O.S.S.A.'s National Executive and the Association appointed the first African to the N.I.C. in 1961.<sup>128</sup> Relationships between the Chamber of Mines and the M.O.S.S.A. were more cordial than those between mine owners and the A.M.W.U., especially after the fracture in M.O.S.S.A./A.M.W.U. relations following the 1963 A.M.W.U. confrontation with the Chamber.<sup>129</sup> The M.O.S.S.A. did not represent more workers or have more members than the A.M.W.U. at any time and it sought to identify more closely with management in later years, thereby breaking the unified front that had usually been presented to the Chamber of Mines at N.I.C. level. It too was monopolized by the upper grade workers (those whose minimum rates were in excess of \$120 monthly) who, including non-members, numbered 1,556 throughout the industry in 1974.<sup>130</sup> The size of the semi-skilled grades (\$40-\$120) which it represented was also large (1,809) and it had bargaining rights for only a small number (1,435) of lower grade members (compound police, cashiers, welfare workers, security guards, telephone operators and laboratory assistants). The M.O.S.S.A. was thus composed of different class interests. As with the A.M.W.U., the N.I.C. levy on the lower skilled grades was smaller per individual than on the higher grades (3 cents for those earning below \$40 as opposed to 25 cents for those getting above \$120 and 7 cents for intermediate grades) and the control of the Association was kept in the hands of the labour aristocracy. So too, like the A.M.W.U., the M.O.S.S.A. claimed to be 'non-racial' and the General Secretary engaged in an argument with the A.M.W.U. in 1963 over which union had been the first in the industry to become so.<sup>131</sup>

The conflict between the A.M.W.U. and the M.O.S.S.A., reflecting some of the class divisions in white society, stemmed from the breaking of the A.M.W.U./ M.O.S.S.A. 'Pact' by M.O.S.S.A. in 1963, an arrangement established in 1948.<sup>132</sup> A.M.W.U. officials always regarded the M.O.S.S.A. as a body amongst whose ranks and executives were 'the future Management of Mines, even if they (were) not that already',<sup>133</sup> This ambiguity of the M.O.S.S.A.'s role complicated the A.M.W.U.'s alliance with them, especially during attempts by

<sup>128</sup>C.M., *Annual Report*, 1961, p.10.

<sup>129</sup>The Chamber of Mines has consistently talked of 'excellent relations' with the A.M.W.U. See especially, C.M., *Annual Report*, 1971, pp.6-7.

<sup>130</sup>N.I.C. Number of Employees on Contributing Mines: March 1974, *op.cit.*

<sup>131</sup>See here correspondence between the President (A.M.W.U.) and the President (M.O.S.S.A.) February, 1963. I am grateful to Mr. H. Bloomfield for allowing me to consult the archives of the A.M.W.U.

<sup>132</sup>See details in A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, November, 1963, p.14.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*

the latter to confront the Chamber of Mines. It even proposed itself as a mediator in the dispute. This would have involved serious compromise for the artisanal class of the A.M.W.U. In the event, the issue went not to Arbitration but to Court since the M.O.S.S.A. Executive would not agree to the former procedure. This was because it would have involved the sharing of costs under the 'Pact' and would also have vitally affected the M.O.S.S.A.'s relation to management. In anticipation of M.O.S.S.A.'s dissociation from the 'Pact', the A.M.W.U. released them of ability. The M.O.S.S.A. compromise with the Chamber of Mines in 1963 clearly differentiated its hierarchy from the controlling groups in the A.M.W.U. The *ex post* rationalization of the rupture in the ranks of the labour aristocracy, offered by the A.M.W.U., was that it clarified issues and allowed 'each Organization to be masters of their own affairs'.<sup>134</sup>

The labour aristocracy's alliance with smallworker capital was maintained during this period. In 1941 there were restrictions on the application of the Agreement to exclude most smallworker enterprises. However, the A.M.W.U. threatened action to have these employers included under the Agreement mounted in the 1960's, especially after the Rhodesian Mining Federation was absorbed into the Chamber of Mines and the A.M.W.U. had to find additional bargaining weapons against management in its conflict over job classification in the skilled/semi-skilled grades. Thus by 1963 the A.M.W.U. were calling for (at least) an Industrial Board to be established on small mines exempted from Part II of the Mineworkers' Agreement, partly as a result of pressure from skilled and semi-skilled workers/members on these mines (8,000 to 10,000 workers in 1965) and partly to ensure stability in labour utilization practices across the whole range of employers in the industry.<sup>135</sup> The issue was subject to dispute and taken to the Industrial Court in 1963. The Court ruled that mines employing less than 150 persons would remain exempt from the Agreement. The Chamber expressed its great relief that the 'goose was spared' and that 85 percent of all Rhodesian mines which fell into this category could continue as before.<sup>136</sup> Although dominated by monopoly capital, the Chamber was not willing, at this stage, to ditch the smaller enterprises which together (under Smallworkers' Associations) formed an important element in the employer class and possessed a certain amount of political leverage. In addition, many small enterprises were owned by large-scale capital and would have been adversely affected by change in the N.I.C. regulations.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>134</sup>A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, October, 1967, p.10.

<sup>135</sup>A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, November, 1963, p.12.

<sup>136</sup>See C.M.J., August, 1963.

<sup>137</sup>See especially the union's complaints in A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, September, 1965, p.18.



The conflict with smallworker (or more strictly, 'exempted') capital become more acute as time passed and the basis for exempting smallworker mines was altered to favour capital.<sup>138</sup> The A.M.W.U. were nonetheless very accommodating at the N.I.C. after 1945 in accepting all but one submission for exemption from Part II of the Agreement (a mine that had 670 employees at the time).<sup>139</sup> They did not press the State to establish an Industrial Board for the *whole* industry in 1963 after the Agreement with the Chamber lapsed as a result of an unsettled dispute at the N.I.C. Such an action, the union claimed, also 'spared' smallworkers from regulation. The mechanization of production meant that some mines did not need to employ as many as 150 workers and to produce a high level of output. Their low level of employment put them outside the scope of Part II of the Agreement. This motivated the A.M.W.U. to call for a change in N.I.C. regulations in order to protect skilled workers against *legal* fragmentation in enterprises outside the union's control.<sup>140</sup>

The M.O.S.S.A. has likewise been in alliance with smallworker capital, but even more so than the A.M.W.U. whose members stood to lose more from privately set contractual arrangements. Thus the minimum regulated conditions under the M.O.S.S.A./Chamber Agreement (1968-72), for instance, were not applicable for those enterprises where the numbers of skilled workers (artisanal and bureaucratic) were less than three.<sup>141</sup> The basis of exclusion changed marginally in 1971. This provision effectively left the M.O.S.S.A.'s lower paid workers unprotected while higher skilled workers were better able to bargain individually for good conditions of employment. Also the M.O.S.S.A.'s closer alliance with management meant that the subject of small-worker exclusion was not a major problem for the labour aristocracy in the Association. This because it was in the artisanal and production tasks that the threat of fragmentation was greatest. The M.O.S.S.A.'s members in the upper grades were not faced with the same threat as were those in the A.M.W.U. As a consequence the rift between the M.O.S.S.A. and the A.M.W.U. widened.

In 1971 the A.M.W.U./Chamber Agreement expired and was replaced. A short term lease given it by both sides, providing for an extension for 6 months, failed to allow enough time for an Agreement. The principal dispute

<sup>138</sup>For details of the changing basis of exemptions see A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, September, 1965, p.11. From 1940-48 mines producing below £800 in value per mensem were exempted; from 1948-59 mines employing less than 3 'journeymen' were exempted; and from 1959-74 exemption applied to mines with less than 150 employees.

<sup>139</sup>A.M.W.U., *G.R.*, September, 1965, p.19.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup>R.G.N. No. 68 of 1972. This position was slightly amended in 1971. See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1971, p.7.

was over 'restrictive practices' adopted by the A.M.W.U. resisting the insistence of mine managements that journeymen operate in dual occupational roles wherever possible in order to alleviate the manpower shortage that became acute in a climate of expansion of output and restrictions on apprenticeship supply.<sup>142</sup> The M.O.S.S.A. kept out of the dispute but tacitly supported the Chamber. Meanwhile the A.M.W.U. stepped up the number of disputes against the Chamber and even threatened strike action, a veiled challenge that was dropped with the acceptance of a 'truce' whereby the union would not force its members to refuse to take on work outside their trade in exchange for which management would not call upon members to take on work which they had not done before. This 'truce' was to remain until a new Agreement had been negotiated. The conflict between the two parties, however, became more accentuated by the skilled manpower shortage that developed after 1969.<sup>143</sup> The State's investigation into the exact nature and extent of the manpower shortage in 1972 was partly aimed at re-establishing amicable relations between the conflicting parties in the ruling-class coalition. At the same time the Chamber took the initiative to increase the supply of skilled workers, especially journeymen and apprentices, along with other employers, particularly the Association of Rhodesian Industries.<sup>144</sup> By 1973, however, the union was also preparing initiatives. It declared its withdrawal from the 1971 'truce', an informal arrangement which nonetheless, as the Chamber warned in its 1973 Annual Report, was enforceable by law. The A.M.W.U. thus informed the Chamber that it considered itself free to take 'whatever action it considered necessary'.<sup>145</sup> Until early 1975 the union had done nothing further than to force the dispute to an Industrial Tribunal, the results of which eventually had a binding effect on both parties and in many respects favoured skilled workers.

The social conflicts between capital and the labour aristocracy were thus complicated but essentially 'non-antagonistic'. An alliance of mutual interdependence typified the socio-economic relations between the various 'fractions' of capital on the one hand and the various dominant elements constituting the labour aristocracy on the other. These complex and dynamic alliances were however more intricate than suggested by the simple notion of the 'deal' struck between 'capital and white workers' that Arrighi and Loney

<sup>142</sup>In March 1974 there were 120 apprentices in foreign controlled mines in Rhodesia. All these apprentices were on 14 mines. There were 211 apprentices on 20 mines in the whole industry at this time. See N.I.C., Number of Employees on Contributing Mines March 1974 (mimeo). For employer views on apprenticeship see C.M., *Annual Report*, 1971, pp.5-6.

<sup>143</sup>See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1969. The Chamber had been stressing the skilled manpower shortage since 1959. See C.M.J., December 1959.

<sup>144</sup>See C.M., *Annual Report*, 1973, p.5. In 1961, however, the industry only trained 108 apprentices. See N.I.C., Number of Employees, January, 1961 (mimeo).

<sup>145</sup>C. M. *Annual Report*, 1973, p.6.

describe as the root of minority dominance in the political economy. Furthermore, the particular complexion and method of dominance by capital was influential for labour mobilization policies in the industry and significantly affected African workers.

### **Conclusion**

The proletarianization of African mineworkers in Rhodesia was a socio-economic process that exhibited certain unique features. Essentially, however, the domination over labour in the industry was rooted in the complex interrelations between foreign capital, the labour aristocracy and the State. This domination provided the means for a high degree of employer social control over labour and also a profitable framework for the continuation of policies of 'primitive accumulation'. Not all African workers were subject to the same forms of exploitation, however. Stratification amongst the African labour force on the mines was further advanced than in the plantation production system. The special features of labour mobilization in the compound system and a high level of worker dependence on the individual employer differentiated the class formation process in the mining industry. African unionism was malformed as a consequence of the particular conditions that prevailed historically in the mining industry. The conditions of labour and union formation differed from the situation that was typical of the rest of the 'industrial complex'.

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